ISSUE 164 | MARCH 2009

DUNGEON™

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® ROLEPLAYING GAME SUPPLEMENT

ISSUE NO. 164

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DUNGEON™

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What to Do when your Party Jumps the Shark

Boy, am I gonna catch flak for this editorial. But recent events have inspired—no, compelled—me to talk about something that every DM has to contend with: party suckitude.

First off, no offense to my party or any other that's had a rough day at the dungeon. The best groups have off sessions. Sometimes they forget they haven't used their encounter or daily powers at inopportune moments. Sometimes they forget to focus their fire (dungeon crawling 101). Sometimes they run around an encounter area like poodles on a 24-hour caffeine bender.

Sometimes, they do all of the above, and then some.

Clearly, you know where this is going, if the title of the editorial didn't tell you everything. But it's an important issue. What do you do when your group just shanks it. Sucks rocks. Just plain old can't pull it together. The dice aren't failing them (although that might be the icing on your mess-of-an-encounter cake). They're just not coordinating, talking, and thinking tactically. And when it comes down to brass tacks, a D&D combat is a tactical experience.

This happened to me recently. I'm running my group through "The Shadow Rift of Umbraforge" from Dungeon #158, and my group just made it to the third encounter under The Happy Beggar, the one with all the wraiths. This is a tough encounter, I'll be the first to admit. The one right before, against the shadar-kai witch, dark creepers, and shadow hounds isn't a walk in the park, either. The wraith fight is tougher. They're insubstantial, which means they're taking half damage, and they regenerate 5 hp a round.

So my group starts the fight, and the mistakes start to pile up immediately. One defender charges the middle wraith in the group clustered around the portal. The second defender charges ... a different target. And the rogue charges a third. If you do the math on expected damage for a 4th-level PC, you'll note that half damage is around 5 or 6 points. So each wraith, on the first round, takes enough damage to regenerate nearly to full on its turn. When you're fighting regenerating monsters, focusing fire is a top priority. If they're regenerating *and* insubstantial? It's mandatory.

It doesn't stop there. Over the next several rounds, the group continued to spread the damage around. The hit point total of all the wraiths continued to inch down almost equally. On top of that, the party striker became distracted by a dark creeper in the corner (who I made effectively a noncombatant in the fight, since he was after something the PCs had and wanted to know who was carrying it), so one of the prime sources of single target damage wasn't attacking the wraiths.

So what's a DM to do? I mean, some might "punish" their players by letting the dice fall where they may. But that's not my style, and I don't encourage that type of play, especially when the group is having a bad night. I think it's a DM's first job to make the game fun for everyone, so I started to compensate for the players. That's right, I cheated. In their favor. I dropped the wraiths' regeneration to 2. Then I put a secret button on the portal that creates a radiant energy zone in the room that kills their regeneration altogether. I made some gentle tactical suggestions. And finally, I left a clear line of escape open.

But my point is that it's important to keep some contingency plans for these occasions in your DMing back pocket for when things go south—really south. A TPK, as much as we toss the event around in gloating terms, isn't really good for anyone. You lose campaign story continuity. Everyone is bummed. Worst case scenario, you might lose players.

We'll see what happens. We left the session mid-fight last time, with lots of anxious and frustrated faces. I hope that next month I'm not writing about how to jump start a campaign after a TPK. I hope they pull it out, and at the least, run away to try the encounter again later. What about your campaigns? Got any stories of encounters gone horribly awry? Send them in to dndinsider@wizards.com.

PARAGON
11–20

Worse than Death

by Robert J. Schwalb

A powerful dilettante goes missing in the wilderness, so it falls to a capable adventuring band to come to the rescue. "Worse Than Death" is a 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons® adventure for five characters of 12th level. This adventure takes place in the wilderness, far from any communities or settlements, so you can drop it into any campaign setting with little work.

illustrations by Jim Pavelec, Sam Wood

cartography by Kyle Hunter

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Background

Festuad il'Sook is known throughout his city as a decadent and effete aristocrat—a man who has no interest beyond his hedonistic escapades and squandering his fortunes on drink, drugs, and excess. From his great estate piled on top of a hill overlooking his native city, he delights in his distractions, opening his doors to young men and women of his community to share in the revelry and sample the wonders only he can offer. Talk fills taprooms, winesinks, and brothels, as the curious and jealous speculate about what happens behind his rose-colored walls while thirsting for their own taste of the forbidden fruit il'Sook offers.

Such a character is bound to attract unwanted attention. Priests, politicians, and even his peers have come out against him, but most change their songs soon enough, switching from moral indignation to some of his staunchest supporters after but a single visit to his grand house on the hill. Those who aren't won over retreat, horrified by what they see and experience, while the rest vanish into the estate, never to be seen again.

Festuad's success and power transcend what any mortal could ever hope to attain. His funds are without limit and his expenses dwarf those of any in the city. Many explain away his good fortune as being the result of business acumen or perhaps a large inheritance, perhaps from an adventuring uncle or aunt, but the fact of the matter is that Festuad receives funding from a much greater benefactor: Fernia, the duchess of Phlegethos, archdevil of the Nine Hells. Indeed, Festuad doesn't even exist. He's nothing more than a mask worn by a succubus named Amala, a cruel devil loosed onto the mortal world to corrupt and harvest souls for her mistress.

Amala has been at her task long enough to make a few enemies, and though vigilant about eliminating hidden threats, she's not naïve; there are always enemies, created from lives she has broken, people she has betrayed, and those who suspect that something foul lurks beneath the pleasant features of an idle youth. Periodically, Amala cleans house, slipping into a new guise to gain the confidence of those arrayed against her, and then she destroys them. It has been a decade since she last wiped out her enemies, and whispers lead her to believe the time for action has come once more.

From Festuad il'Sook's great estate at the top of a hill overlooking his city, he invites young men and women to share in the revelry and sample the wonders only he can offer. He receives his funding from a great benefactor: Fernia, archdevil of the Nine Hells. . . .

Assuming the likeness of a young manservant named Micah, she moved through il'Sook's holdings, listening to rumors and treasonous talk, picking out the orchestrators and uncovering each and every individual with an axe to grind. It took time, but in Micah's guise, Amala gained their confidence, winning them over to her cause by feeding them lies about cruel treatment, worship of demons, and any other fabrication she could concoct to convince her fellow conspirators to help "kill Festuad."

Of those she recruited, she found Tyster Drent, a disaffected dwarf caravan master who despised il'Sook for using and shaming his sister. There's also Cara Toyden, Festuad's household guard captain who blames the master for the horrific scars on her face and for destroying her life. Ayn, an insane halfling maid, suspected il'Sook's true nature, while Joaquin Tantalroy, a fop, simply coveted Festuad's coin. Amala let the conspirators concoct the plan, nudging them as needed, until they settled on kidnapping the aristocrat and ransoming him back to his household to extort his fortunes and then kill him once the gold changed hands. They would hold il'Sook at an abandoned ruin said to lay within a forest a few days to the south and would communicate with their conspirators by Tantalroy, who would remain behind to carry their demands back to the city.

What the conspirators didn't know, and what Amala knew all too well, was that the ruined tower was not as empty as believed, for it housed a mad eladrin, whom Amala corrupted nearly a century ago, and who now abducts travelers that pass through his wood. He would take care of the kidnappers who took her, but Amala still needed someone to deal with the ones left behind. To this end, she has arranged for Lady Marissa Dunderly to hire a band of adventurers to rescue her soon after she is kidnapped. The reward she is offering is enough to secure a talented group certain to both succeed and ferret out the conspirators, thus dealing with the lot in one fell swoop.

It's an insane and convoluted plan, but Amala orchestrates the entire affair not for its logic, but because it suits her. Moreover, it puts her in the path of fresh servants she can corrupt and destroy at her leisure.

Adventure Synopsis

Lady Marissa Dunderly, one of Festuad il'Sook's courtesans and thralls, hires the adventurers to rescue her lover two days after the caravan sets out. With a hefty sum promised, the PCs set out following the caravan's route until they come upon the encampment. The PCs discover the camp is recovering from an attack the night before. Many guards and servants are dead, and il'Sook and a few others have gone missing. The timing seems strange, suggesting things might not be what they seem.

After some investigation, the adventurers should piece together what happened and possibly where the kidnappers went. Chasing the villains through the forest, the adventurers move from their world into the mad demesne of the Patriarch, a hideous eladrin twisted by corruption and insanity. Facing the forest's perils, the PCs eventually find the ruined tower and, with perseverance, il'Sook, who is in the chambers buried in the hill below.

Adventure Hooks

"Worse Than Death" assumes the characters are hired off-stage, having already negotiated the terms of their service with Lady Marissa Dunderly. In exchange for rescuing her lover, she promises to pay them 7,000 gp. Festuad is, however, a terrible villain in his own right, though this might not be readily apparent from the start. As the adventure unfolds, the PCs might learn about il'Sook's true nature. Leaving Festuad to fend for himself does not qualify since he has a silver tongue and he's more than able to bend the Patriarch to his will since he has done so before. If the PCs dispatch Festuad, be sure to award them 7,000 gp as part of the treasure found beneath the ruined tower (unless they plan to bring back his remains to Lady Marissa, in which case consider decreasing that amount by half).

Alternatively, the characters might just happen upon the caravan after the attack. The PCs might become involved simply out of their sense of duty. Or, a caravan member might hire them to recover the missing master. A conspirator could send them into the woods in the hopes the forest will remove any witnesses to the terrible deed they committed.

In all cases, completing the adventure—rescuing the succubus or destroying her—is a major quest and worth 3,000 XP for Festuad's rescue or 3,500 XP for the succubus's destruction.

The Quests

"Worse Than Death" offers PCs opportunities to earn quest XP. Provided here are the possibilities for the quest, and their rewards, in the adventure.

Major Quest—Rescue Festuad or Destroy the Succubus: The PCs are asked to rescue Festuad, but will they rescue him or discover Festuad's true identity and end up destroying her?

Reward: 3,000 XP for the rescue or 3,500 for her destruction; also 5,000 to 7,000 gp for a "safe return" of Festuad and half that for bringing back his remains.

Making Arrangements

You can roleplay through the hiring process, which gives the characters a chance to learn a bit ahead of time. If so, Lady Marissa invites the adventurers to il'Sook's estate just outside of the starting city. There, the PCs get a good look at Festuad's wealth and his unseemly interest in occult art objects that leans toward the sinister. Lady Marissa is a red-haired beauty—a half-elf with a sensuous manner and impeccable looks. She plies the characters with drinks, fine foods, and all the comforts available to her. She offers little about the character of her lover, saying only that he's a man of discerning taste.

She doesn't waste time in getting down to business: She explains that il'Sook was taken from his caravan about two days travel to the south, on the edges of the Whisper Wood. She offers the PCs 5,000 gp for his safe return, half for his remains. She's goes as high as 7,000 gp for his safe return. Once the PCs agree, she supplies the PCs with a map marking the caravan's route, highlighting the spot where the kidnappers struck, and horses to speed them on their way. She urges the PCs to waste little time and find her lover before it's too late.

If asked about a ransom, she explains the kidnappers have yet to make a demand. If asked how she learned of the kidnapping, she reveals one of il'Sook's agents used a Sending ritual to explain the situation and the caravan's location.

The characters can ask around to learn more about Festuad il'Sook from the locals. No rolls are necessary; the PCs learn he is a wealthy man with many friends and many enemies. No one speaks ill of him, for even his enemies know not to whisper against this powerful man. Of course, the lack of ill will might raise some suspicions on its own.

Other Rewards

The characters should earn nine more parcels over the adventure's course. The adventure assigns treasures based on a typical adventuring group's composition as indicated in the encounter features. As with any adventure, consult your players' wish lists and replace items with ones more appropriate for the characters in the party.

Part 1: On the Trail

The caravan waits 75 miles south by road, or about a day and a half by horse. Unless the characters push on through the night—costing themselves one healing surge from the rigors of travel—the character have to camp. Later that night, assassins, hired by the kidnappers (which is part of the plan Amala didn't know about), attack the adventurers to eliminate any potential rescuers.

Tactical Encounter: Night Knives (page 15).

Prisoners

If the PCs think to take any attackers prisoners, they might learn some useful information from them by succeeding on an Interrogation skill challenge (DC 21, see *Dungeon Master's Guide page* 79). A successful challenge reveals they were sent by an arrogant male half-elf rake who paid them well enough to not have to cough up a name. He paid them to watch out for adventurer types over the next couple of days and make sure they disappeared.

Crime Scene

About halfway through the second day, the adventurers reach the caravan.

When the caravan comes into view, read:

The trade road forks, with one route heading south and the other heading east for a dark line of pine trees spread across the horizon. You spy an encampment near the forest where tendrils of smoke rise from the cook fires.

The bonfire burns green wood that was cut from the forest—this is what is causing all the smoke. Three sleek black carriages and five wagons circle the fire, and tents still stand inside the ring. However, only a few guards are standing watch, several tents lay collapsed, and far too few horses remain to pull all the vehicles. Furthermore, about 30 feet or so from the encampment, churned earth suggests a recent burial.

Characters closing in on the campsite find themselves confronted by a pair of guards—one old and the other young. They question the characters' purpose while brandishing spears, but it's obvious to everyone they are poor guardians.

Once the PCs put the guards at ease or frighten them off, Joaquin Tantalroy approaches them. Read:

A half-elf steps out of the heavy smoke, his long blonde hair streaked with soot. He wears a smart doublet and black breeches tucked into black boots. His confidence and good looks are marred only by the muddy stains on his clothing and the fresh cuts across his face.

Tantalroy greets the PCs and welcomes them to the camp. Once he identifies their reasons for being here he says:

"They struck last night. It's clear they had inside help because nearly all the guards, drovers, and even a few servants fell ill just before they attacked. I expect it was poison, since we lost most of them by morning. In any event, a small force swept through the camp, kept myself and a few others busy <gesturing to his face>, while the rest stole into Festuad's tent, killed his lover, and vanished. That's about it. Feel free to look around; I didn't find much helpful, but you might."

There are a few inconsistencies in the report—namely the timetable. If the attack came "last night" as Tantalroy says, then it most likely happened after the PCs were hired (adjust the text as necessary to reflect the speed with which the PCs arrived at the location, though, if needed). Thus, the adventurers might have some further questions, and the answers for the likeliest questions follow.

You say the attack came last night? We were hired two days ago. How can that be? That's odd. You say you were hired? By whom? Lady Marissa you say? Well, she is one il'Sook's courtesans, but I myself am at a loss as to how she anticipated the attack.

Is she trustworthy? About as trustworthy as anyone, I'd say.

Aside from Master il'Sook, who else is missing? We've lost three for certain, though a few servants ran off. Of the notable ones, there's Tyster Dent, our surly dwarf caravan master. We also lost the captain of the guard, Cara Toyden, and Micah, Master il'Sook's manservant.

Where were you during the attack? I fought the kidnappers and took this for my trouble.

Were there any witnesses? Just a few, and they all died from the sickness. From what I understand, five people left the camp, headed for the forest. I can only presume Master il'Sook was among them.

What's your relationship with il'Sook? Me? I'm one of his companions. You might call me a sycophant, but I don't mind. Friend, it's all about power, and Festuad has it in spades.

After a few questions, the half-elf tires of the interview and urges the characters to look around.

What Really Happened

The conspirators, along with a half-dozen killers, struck the camp around midnight the night before. Ayn, the halfling servant, poisoned the wine and food and fed it to the guards, servants, and drivers to muddle their heads and make them easy picking for the killers. Once the poison took effect, the killers came up the road and slaughtered the weakened guards and anyone else who got in their way.

Joaquin, Cara, and Tyster, along with one of the killers, descended on Festuad's tent in the chaos. There, Joaquin murdered his courtesans, while Cara and Tyster dealt with Master il'Sook. Hooding and tying him up, Cara, Tyster, and two assassins led their captive into the woods and traveled to the ruin. No one ever thought to question what happened to Micah. Joaquin believed the servant went with Tyster, while Tyster thought Micah stayed behind.

The Encampment

The adventurers can explore the encampment as they like and without interference.

Campsite: A bonfire burns in the middle of the wagons and carriages, but lack of suitable firewood forced the survivors to use green wood, causing the fire to give off thick smoke. A refuse pit is just outside the encampment, downwind. It's filled with bones, dung, and other refuse. The remaining animals, nine horses, are corralled on the north side of the encampment.

Tents: Inside the ring of carriages and wagons are the tents. Most are two-person pup tents, and many are collapsed or trampled. A larger tent, used by il'Sook, stands untouched since the attack (Tantalroy's arrogance prevents him from checking to see if he left anything damning inside).

Festuad's tent is in disarray and it paints a grim picture of what happened.

When the PCs investigate Festuad's tent, read:

Dried blood covers the tent's fabric walls and collects in pools around where corpses must have lain. A few empty wine bottles, and upturned furniture, do not suggest where Festuad went or if he's even still alive.

Two women died in the tent—both il'Sook's companions. If the PCs think to ask about their whereabouts, Tantalroy says he buried them a few hours ago. Searching the tent and succeeding on a DC 21 Perception check turns up a small jade idol of Asmodeus hidden in a small box beneath his cot, and a ritual scroll of Sending.

Carriages: There are three carriages, each sleek, black, and trimmed with silver. Their roomy compartments can hold eight people comfortably, with more

on the roof provided there's no baggage. Festuad, his courtesan, and a couple of sycophants occupied the lead carriage. More hangers-on claim the second and third carriages.

Characters searching the carriage interior might find something in Festuad's carriage with a vigilant search. A successful DC 16 Perception check in the lead carriage turns up a folded note on stained paper stuck between the cushions. It reads, "tonight" in a rough hand.

Graves: The adventurers can exhume the corpses. Twelve bodies are dumped unceremoniously in a mass grave. The worms have made been at the bodies already, but there's enough left to identify the corpses. There are six dead guards, all human, four servants—two halflings and two humans—and two young women dressed in rich clothing. Characters trained in the Heal skill and who examine the women identify they were stabbed a dozen times each. A DC 21 Perception check reveals that one of the corpse's lacquered nails and fingers are bloody as if she had scratched her attacker.

Examining the other bodies and succeeding on a DC 16 Nature check identifies a faint chemical smell as poison—specifically, oil of taggit, a thick substance favored for its soporific properties.

Characters with the Speak with Dead ritual might ferret out information regarding the circumstances of the two young women's deaths. What follows are typical answers to typical questions.

Who killed you? Joaquin wielded the blade that ended my life.

Where's Festuad? Gone. Taken.

Who took him? Servants and friends, traitors all. The guard captain and caravan master stole him from us.

What do they want with him? I don't know.

Did they say anything? Little, but Cara urged Joaquin to be quick about killing us.

Why did you have to die? I was a witness, I suppose, though I could ever feel Joaquin's lust.

What is Festuad? I don't know, but he's not human.

Other questions? Long association with Festuad as well as the selling of their souls damaged their psyches and so to any other questions they gibber and moan, offering little help.

Wagons: There are five wagons. Three hold supplies such as foodstuffs, tents, blankets, bedrolls, feed, and the like—enough to keep the entire caravan provisioned for two weeks. One wagon is empty and was set aside to haul the valuables that il'Sook acquires in his travels. The last wagon held servants and guards, and is equipped with benches.

Like the carriages, the wagons have been unloaded mostly, with only a few barrels of salted fish, crates, and trunks remaining in their beds. Hidden underneath one of the wagons—the second one searched—is a piece of evidence of the villainy. A successful DC 21 Perception check turns up a puddle of noxious fluid on the ground beneath the wagon. Looking up, the character sees a compartment where more fluid drips from the seam. Opening the compartment reveals a small storage space. Inside, there's a wet black bag, but nothing else. A DC 21 Nature check reveals the fluid is poison: oil of taggit (as drow poison).

Woods: The forest is dark, gloomy, and crowded with old trees that form a wall to either side of the old caravan track. Characters searching the forest's fringes who succeed on a DC 16 Perception check discover a human hand nailed through the palm to an old gray tree—this marks the forest as belonging to the Patriarch. The hand is a few days old, and it is crawling with maggots. The spike holding it in place is crude iron that is streaked with rust and old blood. A second DC 10 Perception check reveals tracks leading off into the woods, away from the road.

Interviewing the Travelers

The characters might interview the other survivors to discern if anyone saw anything.

Astalle Fruex

Slender, attractive in an "undead" sort of way, Astalle has long black hair, with pale skin, red lips, and shadowed eyes. She wears black clothing, low-cut and revealing, but she doesn't flaunt her assets.

Personality Traits: Astalle rejects all notions of morality and religion, lamenting society's preoccupation with what she sees as nonsense. She's not above dalliances with strangers, excessive drinking and using more destructive substances, though she is reasonable in her appetites and rarely overindulges.

Motivations: Although educated and coming from a religious family, Astalle is not a believer. She concedes the gods must exist, but not as how mortals see them. Instead, she sees them as an aloof society of powerful and ancient beings who exploit mortals for their own ends, and they are thus not worthy of worship.

Information: Astalle is new to Festuad's clique and is not yet aware of his true nature. She has been concerned about his influence on the others. She also suspects il'Sook might be up to something, especially since she caught him in the midst of casting a Sending ritual from a scroll.

Ayn

A frumpy halfling, Ayn looks like a doughy ball wrapped in stained clothes. She has porcine eyes and a small mouth underneath a broad dripping nose.

Personality Traits: A religious zealot, Ayn suspects everyone in the encampment of being corrupted, and she sees her master as the source of this brimming evil. Ayn watches. She grunts and tut-tuts when she sees someone doing something she condemns as wicked, but keeps most of her opinions to herself. Ayn interjects jumbled passages from the *Book of Erathis* to drive home her points.

Motivations: The halfling is a devout follower of Erathis, and she sees Festuad as the antithesis of her faith. So, she's thrown in her lot with the rest to ensure he's brought down a peg. She is unaware of who and what he is.

Information: Ayn has few useful talents. She's a passable cook and an acceptable maid, but she sees herself as an expert on religious matters, though her comments are often confused and just plain odd. Perceptive characters (DC 10 Perception check required) detect a faint chemical smell about her. A DC 21 Nature check reveals she smells of oil of taggit: the poison used to knock-out and kill the guards.

She stays closemouthed about her part in the kidnapping until the characters interrogate her (DC 16, Interrogation, see *Dungeon Master's Guide,* page 79; 700 XP). On a success, she reveals her part in the attack—poisoning the guards and others. She wasn't privy to where the others took the master, but they paid her 10 sp for her help—she shows the coins.

Joaquin Tantelroy

A young half-elf with long blond hair and regal features, he dresses in the current fashion—a blue doublet with silver piping, black breeches, and fine boots.

Personality Traits: Joaquin is cruel and arrogant. He behaves badly with no remorse or apology.

Motivations: Greed drives Joaquin; no amount of coin will ever be enough.

Information: Joaquin is a conspirator—the inside man. He doesn't hate Festuad, but he wants his money and status—things that he plans to get now il'Sook is out of the way. He has no idea Festuad is actually a devil and if he did, he'd expose the other conspirators without a second thought out of fear of supernatural agencies.

Joaquin killed the two young women to silence them, but he didn't escape without a few scratches. The left side of his face bleeds and he uses a silk cloth to staunch the blood. Characters discovering the skin and blood under the courtesan's nails (see Graves) should suspect him, and if he's confronted, he says "a love scratch and nothing more." Pressing the matter requires three successful DC 21 Bluff and/or Intimidate checks.Success causes Joaquin to reveal he killed the women and to admit he was part of a conspiracy to remove Festuad from power. He also reveals the destination and the salient bits about their plans. A failure results in him drawing his weapons and attacking the characters. He fights until bloodied, at which point he flees for the forest, where, if the PCs don't get him, the horrors of the wood certainly will. If cornered before he is killed, a single successful DC 21 Intimidate check forces him to reveal what he knows. He'll also reveal this information if the PCs promise to spare him (Bluff DC 21 if the PCs are lying about their intent to spare him).

Joaquin Tantelroy	**Level 12 Elite Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, half-elf	XP 1,400
Initiative +14	**Senses** Perception +14; low-light vision
HP 232; **Bloodied** 116	
AC 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
Rapier (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+17 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, and Joaquin can shift 1 square. *Miss:* No damage, but Joaquin can still shift 1 square.	
Dagger (minor 1/round; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
+15 vs. AC; 1d4 + 6 damage.	
Cruel Taunt (minor 1/round; at-will) ✦ **Fear**	
Close blast 5; one enemy; +15 vs. Will; the target is pulled 1 square, and grants Joaquin combat advantage until the start of his next turn.	
Combat Advantage	
Joaquin's melee attacks deal 2d6 extra damage to targets he has combat advantage against.	
Acrobatic Retreat (move; encounter)	
If Joaquin is marked, end this condition. Joaquin shifts 1 square and then moves up to his speed.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven
Skills Acrobatics +17, Bluff +16, Diplomacy +18, History +16, Insight +11	
Str 15 (+8)	**Dex** 23 (+12) **Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 12 (+7)	**Int** 20 (+11) **Cha** 20 (+11)
Equipment fine clothing, rapier, parrying dagger	

Tum-Tum

With a powdered face, rouged cheeks, and fat, moist lips, there's something filthy about this little man even though he smells of mint. He's short and very fat, with long fingernails and dainty little teeth.

Personality Traits: Fawning and simpering, Tum-Tum is a wretched thing. He touches people who pay him attention, stroking their hands (or claws), and offering compliments to the point he seems insincere. Tum-Tum smiles and giggles, speaking in a high-pitched voice that suggests he's missing something more than sanity.

Motivations: Tum-Tum wants to please, and everything he does is for affection.

Information: This disgusting little man is quite mad and blurts out inappropriate things when he talks. He wails and shrieks about losing his master and is utterly inconsolable. He sports a nasty bruise on the side of his face. The PCs might tease the information from Tum-Tum with three successful DC 16 checks with Bluff and/or Diplomacy. Success calms Tum-Tum enough to report the caravan master, Tyster, batted him aside with a *"crude bludgeon, as he led the master, hooded, into the hideous wood."* (Nobody else here knows about this incident or about Tum-Tum's knowledge of the betrayal.) Failure or use of Intimidate leads to Tum-Tum attacking a character, biting the PC with his sharp little teeth, (+16 vs. AC; 5 damage, and the target is exposed to cackle fever, *DMG* 49). After biting the character, Tum-Tum flees into the forest. He has defenses of 22, and just 1 hit point and never takes damage from a miss.

Extras

The characters can discover additional information by chatting up the other folk. A successful DC 16 Streetwise check turns up a few servants who saw four people leading a fifth, whose head was covered, toward the forest, but no one saw who they were.

The adventurers can also ask about the conspirators and Festuad il'Sook to learn more about them by making a Streetwise check.

Festuad: Master il'Sook paid well and treated his servants with respect (DC 13), though some say a little too nicely (DC 25). He's independently wealthy, a collector, a dilettante, and professional aristocrat (DC 13). Festuad is of middle height with a muscular build, bronzed skin, smoldering eyes, and a wicked smile. His fingernails have a red enameled coating and his long, oiled black hair smells of incense (DC 15). He is charming, cultured, and striking. His good humor is infectious, but there's something dangerous about him. He's an expert on history, the arts, politics, and religion (DC 20).

Tyster Drent: Tyster Drent is the caravan master, and it's his responsibility to manage the drivers, the servants, and the equipment's maintenance (DC 13). Tyster is a middle-aged dwarf with a thick red beard, bald head, and craggy features. He wears a simple, though fine, damask silk uniform and a matching muffin-cap. A small silver dagger pin is his only badge of authority (DC 15). The dwarf does his best to play the part of a dutiful servant, smiling and fawning before Festuad, but then turning his wrath on his underlings when Festuad's out of earshot (DC 20).

Cara Toyden: Cara Toyden sees to Festuad's security, managing the guards, servants, and the rest (DC 13). The guard commander wears a bronze mempo over her face, covering her lips and chin, though one can see scar tissue crawling up her cheeks toward her bright green eyes. She has short, curly red hair. Thin and muscled, she is a competent combatant (DC 15). Toyden, like the others, has a reason to hate Festuad because he was the one who scarred her face. A former lover, when she resisted him, he punished her by scalding her face. She might have quit his company, but his money was too good to refuse. Suffering these years, she has finally resolved to see him dead (DC 22, again, Tantalroy might reveal this if his part in the kidnapping is revealed).

Micah: Micah is Festuad's footman and manservant. He attends to his master's needs, but was lackluster about his duties (DC 13). Short, thick, and always frowning, Micah is a plain fellow with few commendable traits (DC 15).

Festuad il' Sook

Part 2: Tracking the Enemy!

Once the adventurers exhaust every avenue of investigation, the only thing left to do is follow after the kidnappers in the hope of catching up to them before it's too late.

Into the Forest

Following the trail is not so difficult since haste was more important than stealth to those making the trail. Tracking the kidnappers requires a successful skill challenge in which the PCs follow the three sets of tracks and avoid the forest's perils.

Skill Challenge: Tracking the Kidnappers (page 16).

Woodcutter's Cottage

The original owner is no more. For a while, he helped the Patriarch in the old castle ruin by waylaying and drugging travelers, but guilt drove him to suicide. Death offered him no escape though, and his spirit lingers still—a dark, twisted thing, in the thrall of a beautiful lamia who proves a more constant and useful servant to the mad eladrin.

Tactical Encounter: The Cottage in the Wood (page 17).

Corpse

Not far after the Woodcutter's Cottage, the adventurers come upon a grisly sight.

Read or paraphrase the following text:
A woman lies facedown on the ground. She's missing her head. A pool of dark blood cools around the hideous wound.

The corpse is Cara Toyden. She succumbed to one of the many traps scattered through this part of the forest, in particular, a nasty line of adamantine thread stretched between the trees. Cara ran full tilt into the thread, taking off her head at the neck, but breaking the trap in the process. A DC 21 Perception check reveals the broken thread tied to the trees.

Perception Check
DC 21: *Glazed eyes watch you from the victim's head. Frozen in the dead flesh is a surprised look.*

A successful DC 21 Intelligence check identifies the woman based on her description (they don't get to check if they never got the description, though). The trail continues ahead, but there are now only two sets of tracks.

Carriage Graveyard

The tracks continue through the forest, though they move around pairs of trees now. Eventually, they open onto another clearing: a graveyard for old carriages and wagons.

Tactical Encounter: Carriage Graveyard (page 19).

Part 3: Ruins of Malphas Tower

The ruins of Malphas Tower are all that remains of an old eladrin citadel trapped in the mortal world centuries ago. Many of its people quit the tower when the malfunctioning magic that allowed their home to slip in and out of the Feywild exerted an unwholesome effect on them, warping their spirits and contaminating their flesh. In truth, it was Amala behind the malfunctioning magic. Most eladrin left, but not all. One remained—a wretched creature who long lost his name and now calls himself the Patriarch. It didn't take long before the weird influence infected his mind, turning him to darkness and unrepentant evil.

The Patriarch wants to rebuild what he lost. He wants his people to come home, but having no idea where his kin have gone, he constructs companions in the image of his warped memories. Thus he steals travelers, chops them up, and makes new creatures from their bodies.

The kidnappers, unaware the tower was occupied, reached the ruin and felt the full weight of their error as they were pulled into the tunnels, their flesh added to the Amalgamation and other horrors in the tunnels below. The only one spared this fate was Festuad, who immediately set about beguiling the Patriarch with promises of aid, secrets revealed, and anything else he could do to forestall the end the Patriarch intended for him. Festuad lingers, plying his captors with honeyed lies to buy time until help arrives.

Common Dungeon Elements

Malphas Tower is a fraction of its former size, and its splendor has long since been lost to the elements. What was once a graceful spire is now a crumbling monument to a forgotten people, infested by creatures consumed by madness and grief. Beneath the ruin lies the Patriarch's lair, which is a grim complex infused with his insanity.

Floors: The floors throughout are stinking mud mixed with blood, filth, and discarded bits of flesh.

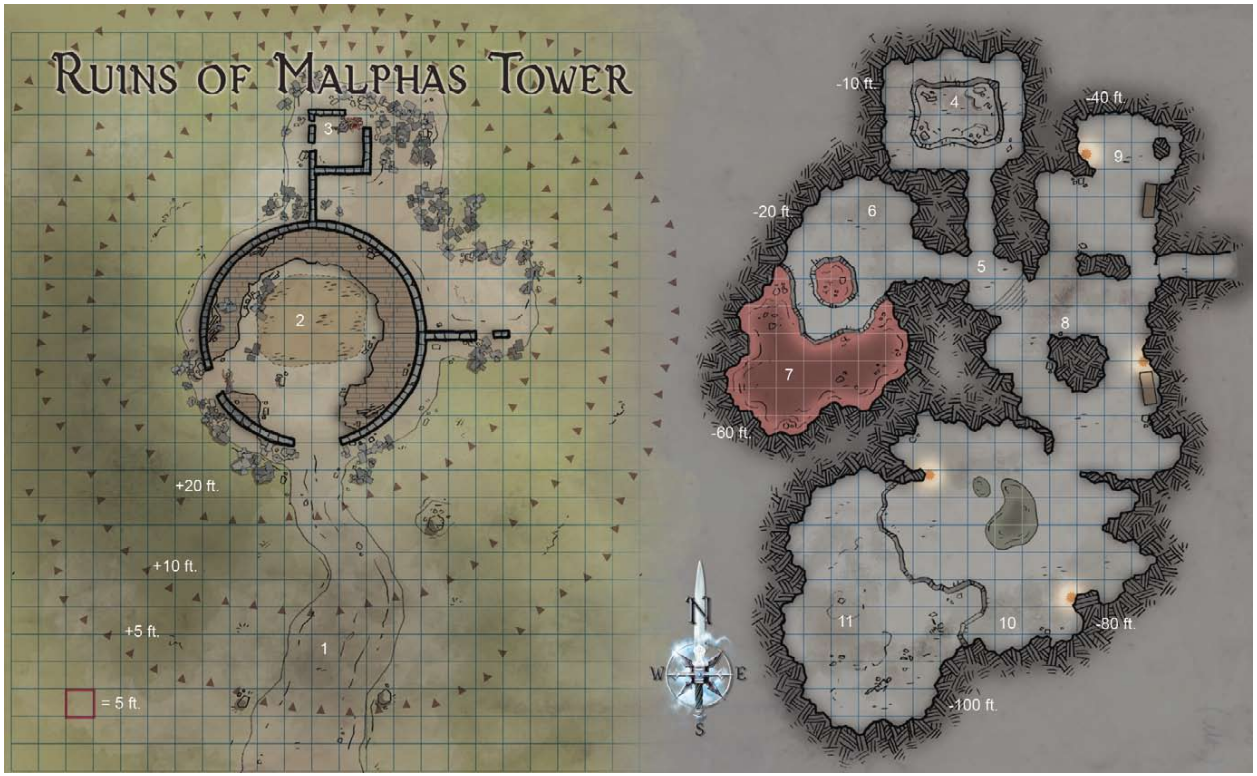
Ceilings: The ceilings are dried clay packed tight.

Corpses: Bodies litter the floors and passages. Most are missing one or more limbs, and all are disfigured beyond recognition of race, culture, or even gender.

Stairs: The steps are muddy and slippery, counting as difficult terrain.

Malphas Tower Overview

The following locations can be found around, in, and under Malphas Tower.



1. Body on the Path

A loose path of gravel mixed with dried bones and teeth runs up to the tower, and lying on it is a corpse that once belonged to a merchant. The corpse is missing everything below its abdomen, and stinking viscera trails off for a few feet behind the body.

Rubble: Squares containing rubble count as difficult terrain. Most pieces are unidentifiable chunks of rock, but a few hold the fantastic carvings that once adorned the tower, suggesting the place's fey origin in the unicorns, nature scenes, and sprites depicted in the material.

2. Infested Tower

The tower is in its last days. Sentries protect the ruin from unwanted guests.

Tactical Encounter: Infested Tower (page 20).

3. Shed

A crumbling wall, overgrown with vines and crawling with black beetles, extends north from the old tower. A roofless shack stands nearly intact just before the sagging wall gives way to rubble. Inside, an escapee's bones lay huddled in one corner near a rotting backpack. Beneath it is a +3 *duelist's rapier* (or some other level 13 magic item).

4. Pit

Ten feet below the tower's floor is the bottom of the pit, which serves as an entrance into the complex. Since the ceiling caved in years ago, the denizens create a fragile floor from crushed cockroaches mixed with dung, clay, and mud.

5. Trapped Passage

This area holds the tunnels' one alarm.

Booby-Trapped Passage Level 12 Obstacle
Trap XP 700

A tripwire sets off an alarm and damages the one setting it off.

Trap: The trap consists of 2 adjacent squares that contain tripwires. When a creature enters the square containing the tripwire without noticing it, the trap sounds the alarm and fires a barrage of poisoned darts at the character triggering the trap.

Perception

- DC 16: The character notices round holes burrowing into the muddy walls.
- DC 21: The character notices the tripwire.

Trigger

When a creature enters a trigger square, the trap sounds the alarm and attacks that creature.

Attack

Opportunity Action **Melee** 1

Target: Creature in trapped square

Attack: +15 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Effect: A heavy iron bell rings behind a hidden panel in the ceiling, alerting all creatures in the dungeon to the presence of intruders. Until the characters take an extended rest, the creatures in the dungeon cannot be surprised.

Countermeasures

- A character who notices the tripwire can automatically avoid it when entering the square.
- A character can disable the trap by succeeding on a DC 21 Thievery check.

6–7. Charnel Pit

This area consists of two rooms, the charnel pit (room 7) and the shelf above (room 6). The dungeon's denizens discard body parts and useless organs here for the carrion eaters. An assassin's corpse floats on the surface of the rotting sea, worried at by the horrible ghouls that dwell in the pit.

Tactical Encounter: Charnel Pit (page 22).

8–9. Parts Is Parts

These rooms are where the Patriarch and his allies harvest body parts and construct new creatures. Tyster Dent lies dead on an operating table.

Tactical Encounter: Parts Is Parts (page 23).

Secret Way: A narrow, cramped tunnel exits this room through the east wall, traveling about a mile until it opens onto a dark hillside not far from the carriage graveyard (see page 19).

Tailor's Nook: An operating table stands in this corner, holding what's left of Tyster Dent, the last kidnapper. He's missing most of what he started his life with and has gained an appalling number of new appendages—the Tailor thought to make him a flesh spider (see page 25).

10–11. Rescue?

These chambers house the Patriarch and his beloved Amalgamation, a horrific abomination he has come to see as his bride. Festuad awaits his rescuers in this chamber.

Tactical Encounter: Rescue? (page 24).

Concluding the Adventure

Over the adventure's course, the adventurers likely have many reasons to suspect Festuad il'Sook of being more than he seems. From the strange circumstances of their employment, to contradictions in timing, to the fact he survives, and also his self-serving nature when finally rescued all point to his true nature. If the PCs rescue him, he's grateful and turns his attention to seducing and corrupting one of the adventurers, luring him or her into his service to harvest another soul for his dark mistress. Festuad might opt not to show his hand right away and instead use the adventurers to further his ends (perform discreet thefts, remove other threats, and so on) until the adventurers grow wise to what he's about, at which point Festuad will undoubtedly call in a favor from the Nine Hells to dispatch adventurers who outlive their usefulness.

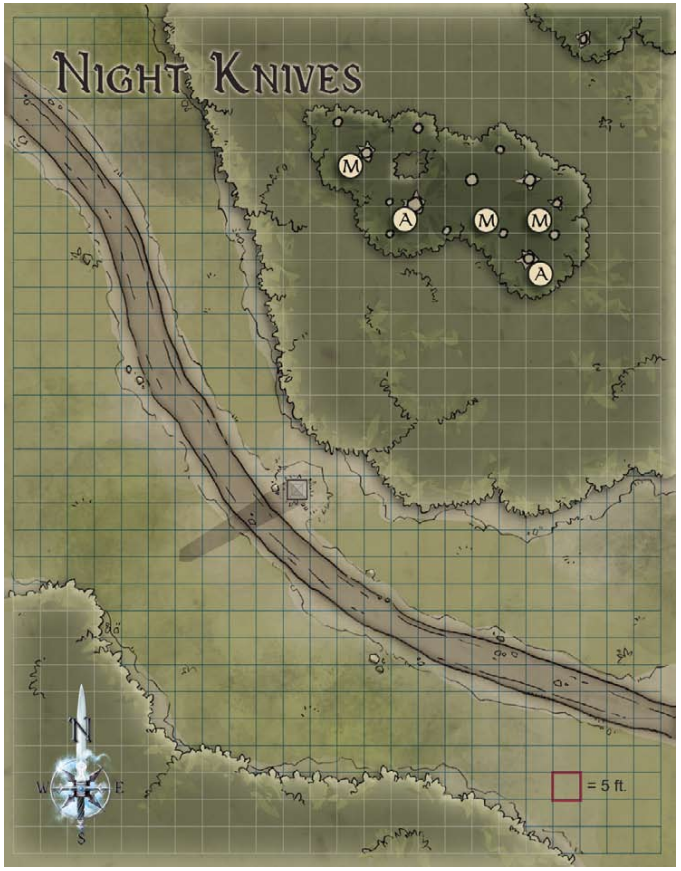
Night Knives

Encounter Level 10 (2,900 XP)

Setup

2 human assassins (A)
3 human murderers (M)

The conspirators hired a small band of assassins to deal with any obvious adventuring types coming down the road.



Perception Check
DC 23: *You hear movement and catch sight of a creeping shadow moving through the underbrush.*

2 Human Assassins (A)	**Level 12 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 700 each

Initiative +16 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 91; **Bloodied** 45
AC 26; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 21
Speed 6

Short Sword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison, Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage, and the human assassin makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +15 vs. Fortitude; see *death blade* for effect.

Swift Hand Strike (standard; encounter) ✦ **Poison, Weapon**
The human assassin makes a melee basic attack, makes a dagger attack, and can shift 1, in any order. Both attacks cannot target the same creature.

Dagger (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison, Weapon**
Ranged 5/10; +17 vs. AC; 1d4 + 7 damage, and the human assassin makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +15 vs. Fortitude; see *death blade* for effect.

Combat Advantage
The human assassin deals 2d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.

Death Blade ✦ Poison
A creature hit by a weapon coated in death blade is blinded (save ends). *Aftereffect:* The target takes 10 poison damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +17
Str 18 (+10) **Dex** 23 (+12) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 13 (+7) **Int** 14 (+8) **Cha** 8 (+5)
Equipment leather armor, short sword*, 4 daggers*, 3 days rations, waterskin
**These weapons are coated in death blade poison.*

3 Human Murderers (M)	**Level 10 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 500 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +6
HP 128; **Bloodied** 64
AC 22; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17
Speed 6

Battleaxe (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 2d10 + 6 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the murderer's next turn.

Executioner's Swing (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Slowed creatures only; +13 vs. AC; 3d10 + 6 damage.

Deadly Arc (standard; encounter) ✦ **Weapon**
Close burst 1; +11 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 6 damage, ongoing 5 damage (save ends), and the target is slowed until the end of the murderer's next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Intimidate +9, Stealth +13
Str 22 (+11) **Dex** 17 (+8) **Wis** 12 (+6)
Con 18 (+9) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 8 (+4)
Equipment hide armor, battleaxe, 3 days rations, waterskin

Tactics

The murderers attack characters on watch, while the assassins target prone or sleeping PCs. The assassins use *swift hand strike* to hit one opponent and fling a dagger at another foe, specifically one facing a murderer. The murderers make basic attacks and following up with *executioner's swing*, reserving *deadly arc* for when they face two or more foes at once.

Features of the Area

Illumination: A campfire fills a 10-square radius with bright light. Otherwise, there's dim light from the moon and stars.

Underbrush: Characters prone or crawling in the underbrush to either side of the road gain concealment.

Treasure: Each assassin carries a pouch with 400 gp.

Tracking the Kidnappers

Encounter Level 12 (1,400 XP)

Setup

Once the PCs decide to track the kidnappers, start the skill challenge.

Tracking the Kidnappers **Level 12**
Skill Challenge XP 1,400

The trail isn't that hard to follow, though the forest can hinder your efforts, and you must take care not to alert hostile creatures in the area to your presence.

The party attempts to find the kidnappers.

Complexity

2 (6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills

Athletics, Endurance, Nature, Perception, Stealth.

Victory

The characters follow the trail and come to the woodcutter's cottage (see below).

Defeat

The PCs stumble into a trio of war trolls (*MM* 254) up to no good. Once they deal with these monsters, the characters can start the skill challenge again, but the complexity drops to 1. If they fail again, they still come to the woodcutter's cottage, but each party member loses a healing surge from their journey's trials.

Athletics (DC 21)

At least one character in the party must make an Athletics check each turn to overcome obstacles in the forest. A failed check costs a random character 1 healing surge in addition to counting as a failure.

The PC makes a path through a dense line of trees and foliage, and deals with other features of the rough terrain in the forest.

Endurance (DC 21)

At least one character in the party must make an Endurance check each turn to withstand the taxing effects of exploring the forest at night. A failed check indicates all party members lose a healing surge in addition to counting as a failure for the challenge.

The terrain in the darkened forest pushes the PC to the edge physically.

Nature (DC 16)

A character can make this check only once. In addition to counting as a success, the characters gain a +2 bonus to Perception checks for the duration of the challenge. A failed check costs each party member a healing surge since the PC mistakes a harmful herb for a beneficial one and feeds the group something noxious instead, in addition to counting as a failure.

The PC uncovers a patch of rare herbs that he or she knows has properties for sharpening the senses.

Perception (DC 21)

The PC picks out the tracks left by the quarry and can follow them easily.

Stealth (DC 21)

At least one character in the party must make a Stealth check each turn to avoid giving away the party's position to the kidnappers and also to the darker things of the forest.

The PC points out paths for the group to walk that provide both cover and the best chance for silent movement.

The Cottage in the Wood

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

Setup

1 feygrove choker (F)
1 lamia (L)
1 ogre warhulk (O)
1 woodcutter's ghost (W)

The woodcutter's spirit lingers on. The lamia made peace with the ghost, promising to set him free.

When the PCs enter the area, read:
The forest gives way to a small clearing, holding an old sod-roofed cottage and a gurgling brook with a small stone bridge spanning it.

The lamia emerges from the cottage to greet the PCs once she notices them. She has the appearance of a slim young woman and offers them shelter and food. Once half the PCs enter the house, she springs the trap.

Perception Check
DC 18: *The character notices the warhulk.*
DC 23: *The character notices the choker.*

Feygrove Choker (F) **Level 12 Lurker**
Medium fey humanoid XP 700
Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 91; **Bloodied** 45
AC 24; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 19
Speed 8 (forest walk), climb 8 (spider climb)
⊕ **Tentacle Claw** (standard; at-will)
Reach 3; +17 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape). A target trying to escape the grab takes a –4 penalty to the check. The feygrove choker can grab up to two creatures at once.
Choke (standard; at-will)
Up to 2 grabbed targets; +17 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 4 damage. The feygrove choker makes a separate attack against each grabbed target.
Vine Fetter (standard; recharge ⚅)
Area burst 3 within 10; nearby vines animate and snare the feygrove choker's enemies; +15 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained (save ends).
Body Shield (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a melee or a ranged attack against Reflex or AC; recharges when the choker makes a successful *tentacle claw* or *choke* attack)
The feygrove choker makes its grabbed victim the target instead. The choker cannot use this power to redirect attacks made by a creature it is currently grabbing.
Chameleon Hide (minor; at-will)
The feygrove choker gains concealment until the start of its next turn. It can't use this power while grabbing a creature or while grabbed.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Elven
Skills Stealth +15
Str 19 (+10) **Dex** 18 (+10) **Wis** 13 (+7)
Con 13 (+7) **Int** 6 (+4) **Cha** 6 (+4)

Lamia (L) **Level 12 Elite Controller (Leader)**
Medium fey magical beast (shapechanger) XP 1,400
Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +13
Swarm's Embrace aura 1; an enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 10 damage.
HP 244; **Bloodied** 122
AC 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 26
Resist takes half damage from melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 10 against close and area attacks
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6, climb 6
Action Points 1
⊕ **Cursed Touch** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Healing**
+16 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). In addition, the lamia regains a number of hit points equal to the amount of damage dealt.
Devouring Swarm (standard; sustain minor; at-will)
Reach 5; +16 vs. Fortitude; 3d6 + 4 damage. When the lamia sustains this power, the devouring swarm deals 3d6 + 4 damage to the target (no attack roll required). The target must be within this power's range for the lamia to sustain the power.
Pacifying Burst (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Psychic**
Close burst 5; +16 vs. Will; the target is stunned (save ends).
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ✦ **Polymorph**
A lamia can alter its physical form to appear as an attractive Medium humanoid of any race or gender (see Change Shape, *MM* 280).
Squeezing Swarm
By altering its shape, a lamia can squeeze through small openings as if it were a Tiny creature (see "Squeeze," *PH* 292).
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Arcana +14, Bluff +16, Insight +13
Str 13 (+7) **Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+8)
Con 18 (+10) **Int** 17 (+9) **Cha** 21 (+11)

Tactics

The woodcutter's ghost phases through the wall and uses *terrifying shriek* to stun the PCs. While waiting for the attack to recharge, it flits away, using its *death's visage* against defenders.

Meanwhile, the feygrove choker rushes from the trees and snatches a soft enemy (controller or striker) with a *tentacle claw*. If faced with two foes, it snakes out another tentacle claw to grab an extra PC and then *chokes* the characters and protects itself using *body shield*.

The ogre warhulk emerges from the woods to protect its lover, the lamia. It moves to defend the shapeshifter, using its heavy flail to smash through the ranks. The lamia uses *pacifying burst* against the PCs before the ogre arrives, and then attacks with *devouring swarm* and cursed touch.

Ogre Warhulk (O)	Level 11 Elite Brute
Large natural humanoid	XP 1,200
Initiative +6	**Senses** Perception +6
HP 286; **Bloodied** 143	
AC 25; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 21	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 8	
Action Points 1	
⊕ **Heavy Flail** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Reach 2; +14 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
Flail Hammer (standard; requires heavy flail; encounter) **Weapon**	
Close burst 2; +12 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, and a Medium or smaller target is knocked prone.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** Common, Giant
Str 22 (+11)	**Dex** 12 (+6) **Wis** 12 (+6)
Con 23 (+11)	**Int** 4 (+2) **Cha** 6 (+3)
Equipment hide armor, heavy flail	

Woodcutter's Ghost (W)	Level 12 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 700
Initiative +8	**Senses** Perception +8; darkvision
HP 91; **Bloodied** 45	
AC 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24	
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** insubstantial	
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing	
⊕ **Spirit Touch** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**	
+15 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 2 necrotic damage.	
Death's Visage (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fear, Psychic**	
Ranged 5; +15 vs. Will; 2d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses.	
Terrifying Shriek (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Fear, Psychic**	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +15 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage, the target is pushed 5 squares and is immobilized (save ends).	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +13	
Str 14 (+8)	**Dex** 15 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+8)
Con 13 (+7)	**Int** 10 (+6) **Cha** 17 (+9)

The feygrove choker fights until reduced to 22 hit points at which point it flees. The lamia falls back if reduced to 60 hit points, but the ogre and the ghost fight until destroyed.

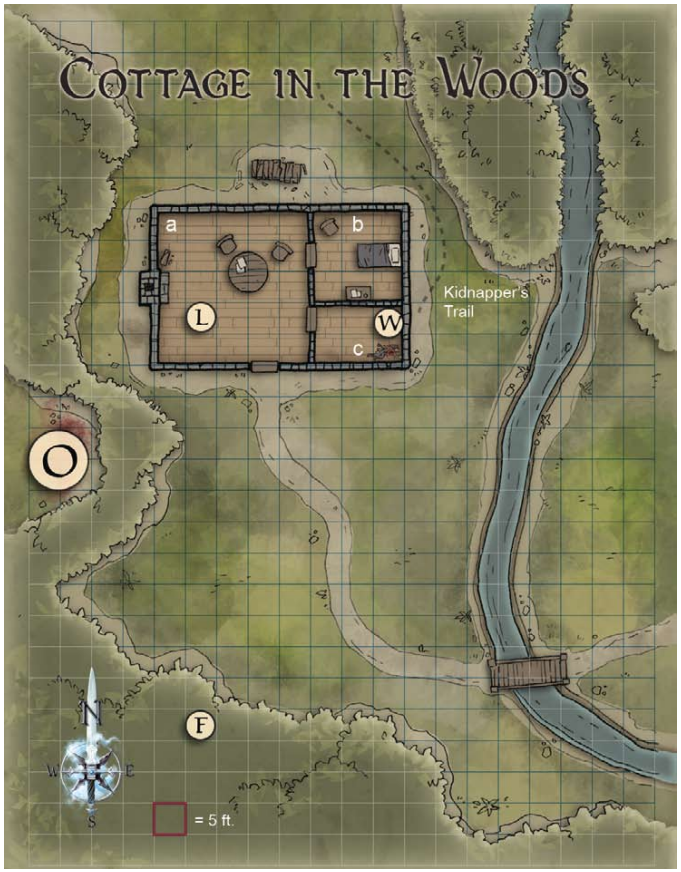
Features of the Area

Illumination: During the day, squares containing trees are dim and the clearing is bright; at night, squares containing the trees are dark and the clearing is dim (moonlight).

Cottage: The cottage contains three rooms, and entering it subjects characters to a horrific odor of rot. *Room A* is the main room and it holds a wooden table, a mildewed rug near the door, and a hearth that is cold from disuse. *Room B* is the old woodcutter's bedroom. It holds a bed, dresser, and a nightstand. A search of this room (DC 21 Perception) turns up a small box under the bed containing 25 locks of hair representing the full range of colors. Pink lace binds each lock–hair from the woodcutter's victims. In addition, the box contains the woodcutter's treasure (see below). *Room C* is where the woodcutter hanged himself. His corpse hangs still from the noose tied to the rafter overhead, though the head is black, the body bloated, and the entire thing crawls with flies. The first character to enter this room is subject to an attack (Fear): +16 vs. Will; the target is dazed until the start of its next turn.

Light Forest: Trees line the clearing's edge and creatures standing in the first square inside the forest gain concealment, while those standing deeper inside gain total concealment.

Ogre's Lair: A small clearing formed from toppled trees houses the ogre's clearing. Strewn about the area are bones, rotting limbs, and dead animals.



Stream: Spaces containing the stream count as difficult terrain. A character can leap across the stream with a DC 6 (DC 11 without a running start) Athletics check.

Treasure: In the box with the locks of hair is a *potion of vitality*, three sapphires (1,000 gp each), and 400 gp.

Conclusion

The kidnappers' trail continues beyond the cottage.

Carriage Graveyard

Encounter Level 12 (3,500 XP)

Setup

1 berbalang (B)
4 eaters of the dead (E)

A berbalang and eaters of the dead claim this strange clearing, but don't place these miniatures on the map until they attack.

When the PCs come to the forest's edge, read:
The trees give way to a large clearing. Dozens of old wagons, carriages, and carts rot in the muddy field.

Perception Check
DC 21: When the characters enter the clearing: *You hear movement coming from somewhere ahead.* The character is not surprised.

Berbalang (B) **Level 10 Solo Skirmisher**
Medium immortal humanoid XP 2,500
Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +6
HP 408; **Bloodied** 204
AC 25; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 21; see also *psychic deflection*
Saving Throws +5
Speed 6, fly 8
Action Points 2

Claw (standard; at-will)
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage.

Summon Duplicate (minor, not usable while bloodied; at-will) **Conjuration, Psychic**
The berbalang manifests an exact duplicate of itself in an unoccupied adjacent square. It can have no more than four duplicates at once, and duplicates cannot summon other duplicates. When a duplicate appears, it makes an initiative check and joins the battle on that initiative count. All damage a duplicate deals is treated as psychic damage.

A duplicate has the same statistics as the berbalang except for its hit points. When a berbalang manifests a duplicate, the berbalang loses one-quarter of its current hit points and the duplicate appears with that quantity of hit points. The berbalang's maximum number of hit points remains the same.

Duplicates last until the berbalang reaches 0 hit points, absorbs them, or uses *sacrifice*. A duplicate must stay within 10 squares of the berbalang at all times or it disappears.

Absorb Duplicate (standard; at-will) ✦ **Healing**
The berbalang absorbs a duplicate adjacent to it and regains 50 hit points.

Berbalang Sneak Attack
A berbalang or a duplicate that flanks an enemy with another duplicate deals an extra 1d8 damage on melee attacks against that enemy.

Sacrifice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Area burst 1 centered on a duplicate; the berbalang can cause one of its duplicates to explode in a burst of psychic gore; +11 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 6 psychic damage, plus the target is dazed (save ends). *Miss:* No damage, but the target is dazed (save ends). *Hit or Miss:* The berbalang takes 25 damage.

Psychic Deflection (immediate reaction, when the berbalang is damaged by an attack; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
The berbalang can deflect the damage it takes from an attack to one of its duplicates. Any effects or secondary attacks included in the attack are also deflected to the duplicate. The damage a duplicate takes in this way is considered psychic damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Supernal
Str 16 (+8) **Dex** 22 (+11) **Wis** 13 (+6)
Con 14 (+7) **Int** 14 (+7) **Cha** 15 (+7)

4 Eaters of the Dead (E) **Level 10 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 250 each
Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion
AC 28; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 26
Speed 6

Hatchet (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+19 vs. AC; 7 damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +16
Str 23 (+13) **Dex** 19 (+11) **Wis** 15 (+9)
Con 18 (+11) **Int** 8 (+6) **Cha** 6 (+5)
Equipment hatchet, rags

Tactics

The berbalang summons a duplicate twice and if not detected, it summons a third duplicate and it attacks. The eaters of the dead wait to attack until the berbalang sacrifices one of its duplicates. They rip into any dazed enemies.

Features of the Area

Illumination: During the day, the clearing is bright and the woods are dim; at night, the clearing is dim (from moonlight), and the woods are dark.

Carriages and Wagons: These vehicles are all rotting and unserviceable, and entering their spaces costs 3 squares of movement.

Infested Tower

Encounter Level 11 (3,425 XP)

Setup

Ham (H)
1 cockroach swarm
2 crusties (C)
3 giant cockroaches

The Patriarch entrusts his home's security to a pair of crusties, which are living constructs fashioned from parts harvested from captured prisoners. These sentries loiter on a ledge inside the tower, where they watch for trespassers. Ham, a horror sporting a rotting pig's head in place of his own, waddles around the tower carrying a bucket of slop for the crusties to eat. The area (room 4) beneath the tower holds a nest of cockroaches, who survive by consuming escapees and those scraps left by the dungeon's inhabitants.

When the PCs approach the ruined tower, read:
Thrusting up from the hilltop is a crumbling tower, not unlike a broken sword. A yawning hole in the side and a few smaller rents grant access to its graveled interior.

Perception Check
DC 26: *For an instant, you see a grotesque face glaring at you, peeking out overtop the wall. Its eyes were in the wrong place and chunks of hardened slime clung to its greenish flesh.*

Ham (H) **Level 14 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (blind, living construct) XP 1,000
Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +8; blindsight 10
HP 175; **Bloodied** 87
AC 25; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23
Saving Throws +2 against ongoing damage
Speed 6
⊕ **Cleaver** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
Head Butt (minor 1/round; recharge ⚅ ⚄ ⚃)
+15 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 8 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
Slice and Dice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Dazed, stunned, or helpless targets only; +17 vs. AC; 2d6 + 8 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Intimidate +11
Str 23 (+13) **Dex** 17 (+10) **Wis** 12 (+8)
Con 25 (+14) **Int** 5 (+4) **Cha** 9 (+6)
Equipment hide armor, 2 cleavers
Description This hulking humanoid's head is that of a rotting pig, and corruption oozes from empty eye sockets.

Cockroach Swarm **Level 12 Skirmisher**
Medium natural beast (swarm) XP 700
Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision
Stench (Poison) aura 2; enemies within the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.
Swarm Attack aura 1; the cockroach swarm makes a melee basic attack against each enemy that begins its turn within the aura.
HP 124; **Bloodied** 62
AC 28; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 20
Resist half damage from melee or ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 10 against close or area attacks
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb)
⊕ **Corrosive Surge** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Acid**
+15 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 acid damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).
Scuttling Mass (move; at-will)
The cockroach swarm shifts 3 squares.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +17
Str 19 (+10) **Dex** 22 (+12) **Wis** 13 (+7)
Con 20 (+11) **Int** 1 (+1) **Cha** 6 (+4)

2 Crusties (C) **Level 11 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid (living construct) XP 600 each
Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 94; **Bloodied** 47
AC 27; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 20; see also *crusty hide*
Saving Throws +2 against ongoing damage
Speed 6
⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.
Roach Barrel (standard; at-will)
Area burst 1 within 10; +14 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 5 damage, and the target is slowed and takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends both).
Eruption of Maggots (when reduced to 0 hit points) ✦ **Fear**
Close burst 1; +16 vs. Will; the target is dazed (save ends). The crusty explodes in a fountain of squirming maggots.
Crusty Hide (while bloodied)
The crusty takes a -2 penalty to AC and Fortitude.
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +16
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 22 (+11) **Wis** 11 (+5)
Con 22 (+11) **Int** 5 (+2) **Cha** 3 (+1)
Equipment 3 roach barrels
Description Amber-colored crust clings to these humanoid creatures' patchwork hides.

3 Giant Cockroaches **Level 12 Minion**
Medium natural beast XP 175 each
Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision
Stench (Poison) aura 2; enemies within the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 28; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 20
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb)
⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
+17 vs. AC; 6 damage.
Scuttle (move; at-will)
The giant cockroach shifts 3 squares.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 18 (+10) **Dex** 23 (+12) **Wis** 13 (+7)
Con 16 (+9) **Int** 2 (+2) **Cha** 6 (+4)

Tactics

The crusties fling casks filled with cockroaches at the leading adventurers. They remain on the ledge until they run out of casks. Once exhausted, the crusties drop from the ledge, taking 1d10 damage from the fall and landing prone. They are utterly careless, tortured as they are, and ready to embrace death.

Ham lurches into the fight at the start of the second round. He moves around the tower, dropping his slop bucket, and joins the battle through one of the gaps in the wall. He prefers to use *slice and dice* along with his *head butt*, scattering and destroying his enemies at all sides.

The cockroaches do not join the fight right away. They join the battle only when a section of weakened floor collapses, at which point they roll initiative and boil up from below, hungry for flesh.

The cockroach swarm keeps moving, washing over and around enemies to position itself for the largest feast. Meanwhile, the giant cockroaches seek out dazed targets, so they go after Ham's leavings first.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The lighting depends on the time of day. During the day, bright light fills the area. At night, the center is dimly lit by moonlight, but dark in the spaces beneath the ledge.

Ledge: A ledge 10 feet above the floor is all that remains of the level above. A character can make an Athletics check to reach the ledge: divide the check result by 10 (or 5 if the character moves at least 2 squares before the check) and add the character's height to the result (*PH* 182).

A character can attack the ledge to cause it to drop. One square of ledge has an AC 16, other defenses 10, resist 5 all, and 30 hit points. If reduced to 0 hit points, that section of ledge collapses, carrying with it any creature on the ledge. The space below becomes difficult terrain until cleared.

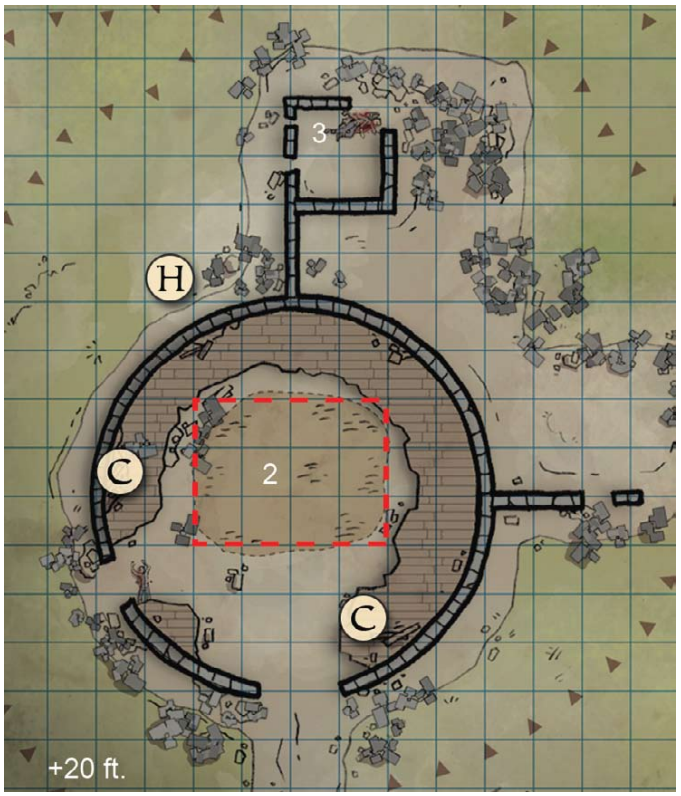
Corpse: A dead assassin is where indicated on the map, though it's hard to tell who or what the victim was since the cockroaches gobbled up all the soft bits and left only bones behind.

Rubble: Crumbled masonry litters the hill's slopes. Spaces containing rubble count as difficulty terrain.

Weakened Floor: The red-dashed line indicates an area of weakened floor. Any creature ending its move in a space containing weakened floor is subject to an attack: +16 vs. Reflex; the character and each adjacent square of weakened floor falls 10 feet to room 4 below. A character takes 1d10 damage from the fall and lands prone. On a miss, the floor stays intact, but it can attack on the following round.

Old Carving: Characters inspecting the interior wall discover a relief carving of a beautiful woman's face, with arched features, delicate lips parted slightly, and kind eyes. A smear of excrement across the face suggests what the denizens here think of the carving.

Treasure: One of the crusties (the first one the PCs search) carries a sack containing a topaz (500 gp), 100 gp, and 400 sp. In addition, there's a +4 *magic holy symbol* (or some other level 16 magic item).



Conclusion

If the characters avoided collapsing the floor, a DC 16 Dungeoneering check reveals the floor's weakness. Characters can rip up the floor with little effort and once they descend, they find a cockroach swarm and three giant cockroaches waiting in the darkness.

Charnel Pit

Encounter Level 11 (3,100 XP)

Setup

1 death hag (D)
1 gibbering mouther (G)
3 horde ghouls (H)

Several creature prowl the fetid darkness here.

When the PCs enter this room, read:

A thin young woman shuffles about in the stinking gloom. She digs into a pit with a long pole.

Tactics

The gibbering mouther gibbers and flows toward the closest PC then uses *gibbering feast* to attack. The death hag keeps back until one or more characters come in range of *life drain*, which she uses straightaway. The horde ghouls scramble up the pit's walls.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The death hag has a lit candle affixed to the top of her head by melted wax, thus she sheds dim light in a 2-square radius.

Charnel Pit: The charnel pit drops 20 feet into a soup of liquefied flesh another 20-feet deep. A fall deals 2d10 damage and the character sinks to the bottom. Characters can swim with a DC 15 Athletics check. Climbing out of the pit requires a DC 20 Athletics check.

Treasure: The night hag, who digs through the mess with a long, hooked pole, recovered a level 14 magic item, a sack containing 2,400 gp, and a human hand with a platinum ring worth 2,000 gp.

Death Hag (D) **Level 18 Soldier**
Medium fey humanoid XP 2,000

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +12; low-light vision
HP 171; **Bloodied** 85; see also *life drain*
AC 34; **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 32
Resist 10 necrotic
Speed 6

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Necrotic**
+24 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target is marked and cannot spend healing surges or regain hit points until the end of the death hag's next turn.

⊹ **Life Drain** (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Healing, Necrotic**
Close blast 3; +22 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 4 necrotic damage, and the death hag regains 5 hit points for each creature damage by this attack.

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ✦ **Polymorph**
A death hag can alter its physical form to appear as a female of any Medium humanoid race (see Change Shape, *MM* 280).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Bluff +19, Insight +17, Intimidate +19, Nature +17
Str 25 (+16) **Dex** 18 (+13) **Wis** 17 (+12)
Con 19 (+13) **Int** 16 (+12) **Cha** 20 (+14)
Equipment candle, 20-foot long hooked pole

Gibbering Mouther (G) **Level 10 Controller**
Medium aberrant magical beast XP 500

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +4; all-around vision, darkvision
Warped Ground aura 3; enemies treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain.
HP 110; **Bloodied** 55
AC 22; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 19
Speed 5, swim 5

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Acid**
+15 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

⊹ **Gibbering** (free, once on the gibbering mouther's turn before it takes other actions; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Close burst 5; deafened creatures are immune; +12 vs. Will; the target is dazed until the end of the gibbering mouther's next turn.

⸸ **Gibbering Feast** (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Acid**
Close burst 5; unnatural mouths appear on dazed creature in the burst and bite them; +15 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

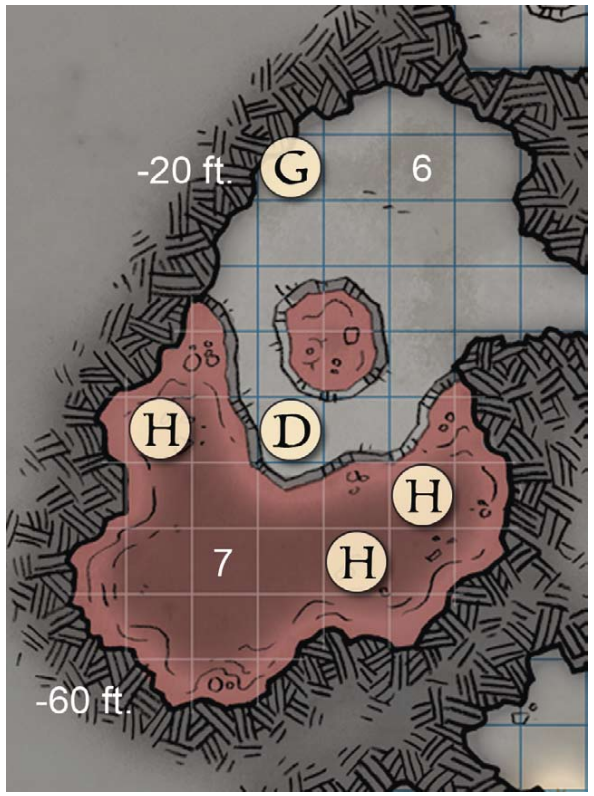
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 19 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 8 (+4)
Con 22 (+11) **Int** 4 (+2) **Cha** 18 (+9)

3 Horde Ghouls (H) **Level 13 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 200 each

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 25; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 20
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic
Speed 8, climb 4

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)
+16 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +16
Str 17 (+8) **Dex** 22 (+11) **Wis** 14 (+7)
Con 18 (+9) **Int** 13 (+6) **Cha** 15 (+7)



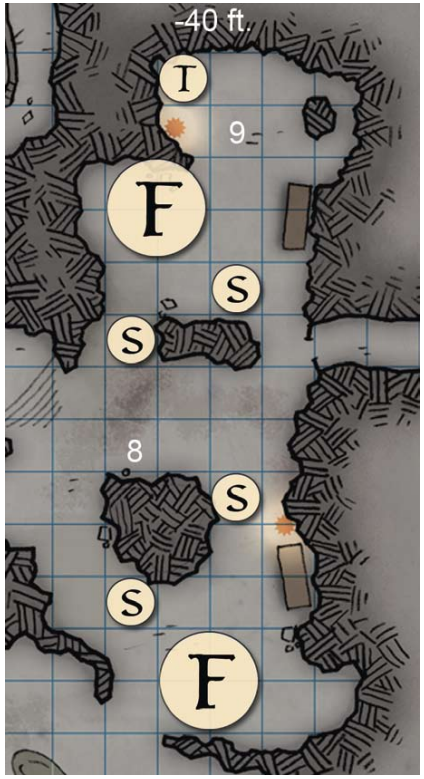
Parts Is Parts

Encounter Level 13 (4,200 XP)

Setup

Grim Tailor (T)
2 flesh golems (F)
4 slipperies (S)

The Grim Tailor fashions wondrous and terrible things in these dark chambers and looks to add the adventurers to his foul collection. The tailor is a spiderlike creature, it scuttles about on seven legs and wields barbed needles trailing thread in its five arms.



When the PCs enter the room, read:

Wisps of thread, hooked chains bearing haunches of meat, and pools of blood fill this natural cavern. Hulking humanoids stand in the shadows.

Tactics

The golems and slipperies converge on the adventurers, while the Grim Tailor emerges from his corner to tie up and *tuck away* adventurers for later experimentation.

Grim Tailor (T) **Level 13 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (living construct) XP 800
Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +13; darkvision
Snagging Thread aura 1; enemies starting their turns within the aura are slowed until the start of their next turns.
HP 126; **Bloodied** 63
AC 29; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 23
Speed 7, climb 3 (spider climb)
⨁ **Needle** (standard; at-will)
+20 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). Targets take a -2 penalty to saving throws against this slowed condition.
⨽ **Expert Stitch** (standard; at-will)
Slowed targets only; +18 vs. Fortitude; target is restrained (save ends). *Aftereffect:* The target is immobilized (save ends). Targets take a -2 penalty to saving throws against this restrained condition.
⨽ **Tuck Away** (minor 1/round; at-will)
The Tailor enters an adjacent restrained creature's space and pulls the target onto its back. The target takes a -2 to attack rolls against the Tailor while it is tucked away. Whenever the Tailor moves, the target moves with it. When the target is no longer restrained, it escapes into an empty adjacent square.
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Intimidate +12, Stealth +18
Str 19 (+10) **Dex** 24 (+13) **Wis** 14 (+8)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 18 (+10) **Cha** 12 (+7)
Equipment spools of multicolored thread, needles

2 Flesh Golems (F) **Level 12 Elite Brute**
Large natural animate (construct) XP 1,400 each
Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision
HP 304; **Bloodied** 152; see also *berserk attack*
AC 26; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 22
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6; can't shift
Action Points 1
⨁ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC (+18 while bloodied); 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
⨽ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)
The flesh golem makes two slam attacks.
⨽ **Berserk Attack** (immediate reaction, when damaged by an attack while bloodied; at-will)
The flesh golem makes a slam attack against a random target within its reach.
⨽ **Golem Rampage** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅)
The flesh golem moves up to its speed plus 2 and can move through enemies' spaces, provoking opportunity attacks as normal. When it enters a creature's space (ally or enemy), the golem makes a slam attack against that creature. The creature remains in its space, and the golem must leave the space after it attacks. The golem must end its rampage in an unoccupied space.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 20 (+11) **Dex** 7 (+4) **Wis** 8 (+5)
Con 22 (+12) **Int** 3 (+2) **Cha** 3 (+2)

4 Slipperies (S) **Level 11 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid (living construct) XP 150 each
Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 25; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23
Speed 7
⨁ **Gooey Attack** (standard; at-will)
+16 vs. AC; 6 damage and slide the target 1 square.
✧ **Slimy Death** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ✦ **Zone**
Close burst 1; the burst creates a zone of slime that lasts until the end of the encounter. Any creature that ends its movement within the zone is slowed until the end of its next turn.
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +16
Str 12 (+6) **Dex** 22 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+9)
Con 8 (+4) **Int** 6 (+3) **Cha** 8 (+4)
Description This creature is a mess of gooey flesh.

RESCUE?

Encounter Level 11 or 13 (3,200 or 4,600 XP)

Setup

Amalgamation (A)
Patriarch (P)
4 flesh spiders (S)
Festuad il'Sook (F)

These chambers serve as the Patriarch's lair and the home of his queen, the shuddering horror that is the Amalgamation. Here one also finds the sycophantic flesh spiders, which are horrific spawn that feast on the Amalgamation's leavings. Festuad il'Sook avoided being dissected and remade into one of the Patriarch's mockeries through his wit and cunning. He has not yet seduced the Patriarch but he might if the mad eladrin changes his mind about il'Sook's fate.

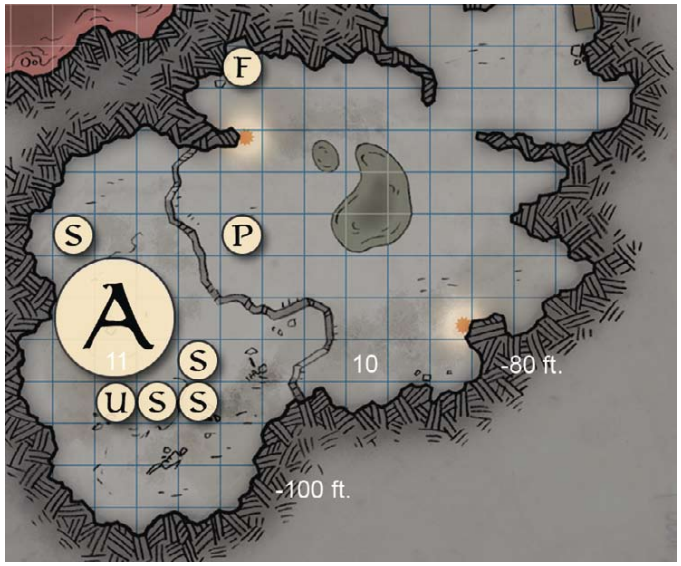
With this area's nearness to room 10, the Patriarch knows the adventurers are nearby. His madness prevents him from helping the Grim Tailor, for he places the wellbeing of his beloved queen above everything else.

If the PCs choose to include Festuad in the battle in this encounter, the higher of the two numbers listed above for the encounter level (and XP) are the ones that should be used. Otherwise, if the PCs brush off Festuad's fear as being selfish (and try to ignore his attack as listed in "Tactics" below) use the lower of the two numbers.

When the PCs enter this room, read:

A crude stair descends a few feet into a wide natural cavern. Clear slime clings to the walls and hangs in ropes from the ceiling, while something awful bubbles in a pool at the room's center. Beyond this chamber, the cavern drops away to a lower level where you see a massive female form, with pale skin, speckled in green blotches and crisscrossed with throbbing veins. Its multicolored hair hangs in knots and its face is a horror, being a dozen eyeless faces stitched together around a wooden frame. What's worse is that several fleshy creatures crawl across its shuddering bulk, sipping at pools of corruption collecting in its dimples.

Before this spectacle stands an aged eladrin male, whose long white hair has turned yellow with age, wearing a stained apron overtop a puce shirt. He trembles with rage, and his insane eyes rise to peer at you through brittle locks. He speaks, sending brown spittle into the air, "You dare? You dare?"



Perception Check
DC 20: *Huddled in a corner is a frightened young man with smooth skin, fine features, and red lacquered nails. There can be no mistake: He is Festuad il'Sook.*

Tactics

The Patriarch attacks at once, charging the lead character, while the flesh spiders drop off their matron and join father in his struggle. The sudden violence agitates the Amalgamation, and she waddles forward, squirting foulness with every step. Fearing for his life, Festuad uses *charming kiss* on the closest adventurer and uses that character to cover his escape.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The Patriarch carries an everburning torch that shines bright light in a 5-square radius. Otherwise, the room is dark.

Ceiling: The ceiling stretches 20 feet overhead at the upper level and 40 feet at the lower level.

Stairs: Crude earthen steps descend from room 9 to room 10. Spaces containing stairs count as difficult terrain.

Corrosive Muck: In the center of room 10 is a pool of corrosive muck. Characters entering or starting their turns in a square containing corrosive muck take 10 acid damage and are slowed until the start of their next turn.

Treasure: The Patriarch offered up his treasures to his bride and they are ignored and trampled in the filth of room 10. The treasure includes 20 pp, 4,303 gp, 8,970 sp, and a level 15 magic item.

4 Flesh Spiders (S) **Level 11 Minion**
Medium natural animate (living construct) XP 150 each

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 27; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 20
Speed 8, climb 4 (spider climb)

⊕ **Slobbering Fangs** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
+16 vs. AC; 5 damage (7 damage with combat advantage).

Evasive Scuttle (immediate interrupt, when the target of a melee or close attack; encounter)
The flesh spider shifts 4 squares.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +16
Str 18 (+9) **Dex** 22 (+11) **Wis** 12 (+6)
Con 11 (+5) **Int** 6 (+3) **Cha** 4 (+2)

Amalgamation (A) **Level 15 Brute**
Huge natural animate (blind, living construct) XP 1,200

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +9; blindsight 10
Stench (**Poison**) aura 1; enemies that enter or start their turns within the aura take a –2 penalty to attack rolls.
HP 183; **Bloodied** 91; see also *fragile construction*
AC 27; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 24
Saving Throws +2 against ongoing damage
Speed 5

⊕ **Tide of Flesh** (standard; at-will)
Reach 3; +18 vs. AC; 3d6 + 8 damage.

Fearsome Backhand (when first bloodied)
Close burst 2; +18 vs. AC; 3d6 + 8 damage, and the amalgamation makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +16 vs. Fortitude; 3d6 + 10 damage, and push the target 8 squares and knock the target prone.

Fragile Construction (while bloodied) ✦ **Acid**
At the start of the amalgamation's turn, it takes 10 acid damage, and each creature within 2 squares also takes 10 acid damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 25 (+14) **Dex** 14 (+9) **Wis** 15 (+9)
Con 23 (+13) **Int** 3 (+3) **Cha** 6 (+5)

Festuad il'Sook (F) **Level 12 Elite Controller**
Medium immortal humanoid (devil, shapechanger) XP 1,400

Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision
Allure (**Charm**) aura 1; all creatures within the aura take a –2 penalty to Will.
HP 230; **Bloodied** 115
AC 26; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 26
Resist 20 fire
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6, fly 6
Action Points 1

⊕ **Corrupting Touch** (standard; at-will)
+17 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage.

Charming Kiss (standard; at-will) ✦ **Charm**
+17 vs. AC; on a hit, Festuad makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +16 vs. Will; the target cannot attack Festuad, and if the target is adjacent to Festuad when he is targeted by a melee or ranged attack, the target interposes itself and becomes the target of the attack instead. The effects last until Festuad or one of his allies attacks the target or until Festuad dies.
If the target is still under the effect of this power at the end of the encounter, Festuad can sustain this effect indefinitely by kissing the target once per day. Festuad can affect only one target at a time with his *charming kiss*.

Dominate (minor; at-will) ✦ **Charm**
Ranged 5; +16 vs. Will; the target is dominated until the end of Festuad's next turn.

Second Thoughts (immediate interrupt, when targeted by an attack; at-will) ✦ **Charm**
Ranged 5; attacker only; +16 vs. Will; the target is dominated until the end of Festuad's next turn.

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ✦ **Polymorph**
Festuad can alter his physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique creature (*MM* 280).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Supernal
Skills Bluff +17, Diplomacy +17, Insight +16, Stealth +10
Str 12 (+7) **Dex** 19 (+10) **Wis** 20 (+11)
Con 11 (+6) **Int** 16 (+9) **Cha** 23 (+12)
Equipment fine clothing

The Patriarch (P) **Level 12 Elite Skirmisher (Leader)**
Medium fey humanoid, eladrin XP 1,400

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
Swirling Madness (**Fear**) aura 1; the Patriarch makes a mind rend attack against each enemy that starts its turn within the aura.
HP 244; **Bloodied** 122
AC 26; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 21
Saving Throws +2; +7 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *fey step*
Action Points 1

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 damage, and if the Patriarch is marked, end this condition.

⊕ **Mind Rend** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fear**
+15 vs. Will; the target is dazed until the end of the Patriarch's next turn.

Flesh-Splitter (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Make a longsword attack against two targets. The Patriarch can shift before or after each attack. If both attacks hit, both targets are slowed (save ends).

Haunted by the Past (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) **Fear, Psychic**
Close burst 3; targets enemies; +15 vs. Will; the target is dazed (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is dominated instead of stunned (save ends). *Aftereffect:* The target takes 10 psychic damage.

Fey Step (move; encounter) ✦ **Teleportation**
The Patriarch teleports 5 squares.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Arcana +20, Heal +10, History +15
Str 13 (+7) **Dex** 22 (+12) **Wis** 8 (+5)
Con 18 (+10) **Int** 25 (+13) **Cha** 13 (+7)
Equipment stained robes, longsword, everburning torch

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb contributed design to such books as the *Forgotten Realms® Player's Guide, Draconomicon I: Chromatic Dragons, Manual of the Planes, P2: Demon Queen's Enclave, Martial Power, Player's Handbook 2, Eberron® Campaign Guide, Eberron Player's Guide, Divine Power, Adventurer's Vault 2, Draconomicon 2: Metallic Dragons, Primal Power,* as well as numerous articles for D&D Insider. Robert lives in Tennessee.

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Dungeon Delve

Return of the Poisoned Shadows

by Greg Marks

illustrations by Steve Argyle, Eric Deschamps

cartography by Jason Engle

Within the Dungeon Delve™ *supplement, you'll find many delves, or mini-adventures, that you can integrate into your campaign or play as one-shots. One of them is called "Poisoned Shadows," and if you're interested in running it (or if you have already run it), the delve that follows below picks up where "Poisoned Shadows" leaves off.*

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Level 8: Return of the Poisoned Shadows

After having dealt with the Poisoned Shadows Assassins Guild, their dangerous leaders, and their patron the black dragon Nightshade, the party finds that the mysterious nighttime assassinations have not ceased. In fact, it appears as if allies of the PCs are specifically being targeted and so they might feel as if they have no choice but to venture into the sewers once more to thwart the return of the Poisoned Shadows! As noted above, this delve is intended to be played following the Level 8 delve from *Dungeon Delve*.

Suggested Parts List

Tiles

Number	Tile	Source*
1	1×1 floating barrel	*Streets of Shadow*
1	1×1 floating crate	*Streets of Shadow*
1	1×1 debris	*Streets of Shadow*
1	1×1 grate	*Streets of Shadow*
1	1×1 rat swarm	*Streets of Shadow*
1	1×2 water trough	*Streets of Shadow*
1	1×2 pipe	*Streets of Shadow*
1	1×2 sewer floor on half	*Streets of Shadow*
2	1×2 wooden bridge	*Streets of Shadow*
2	2×2 corner	*Streets of Shadow*
1	2×2 floating corpse	*Streets of Shadow*
2	2×2 sewer floor on one side	*Streets of Shadow*
2	2×2 sewer floor with debris in the water	*Streets of Shadow*
2	2×4 floor	*Streets of Shadow*
2	2×4 sewer hallway	*Streets of Shadow*
1	2×4 bridge	*Streets of Shadow*
1	2×4 intake pipe	*Streets of Shadow*
1	2×4 3-way sewer intersection	*Streets of Shadow*
1	2×8 sewer with floor on one side	*Streets of Shadow*
2	3×3 rubble	*Streets of Shadow*
1	4×4 corner	*Streets of Shadow*
1	4×4 offset sewer intersection	*Streets of Shadow*
1	4×4 outtake pipe	*Streets of Shadow*
1	4×4 sewer hallway	*Streets of Shadow*
2	4×4 3-way sewer intersection	*Streets of Shadow*
1	4×4 4-way sewer intersection	*Streets of Shadow*
1	4×8 offset sewer intersection	*Streets of Shadow*
2	4×8 sewer with walkways on both sides	*Streets of Shadow*
1	5×5 wooden dais	*Streets of Shadow*
1	8×8 cobblestone street	*Streets of Shadow*

* You need only one set of tiles from this source.

Miniatures

Number	Miniature Name (Monster or NPC)	Source
1	Howling Hag (shadar-kai witch)	*Dungeons of Dread*
4	Shadar-Kai Assassins (shadar-kai chainmasters)	*Desert of Desolation*
5	Magma Brutes (troll shades)	*Dungeons of Dread*
1	Ogre Pulverizer (Snornaugh)	*Demonweb*
1	Drow Assassin (Eluron Bladewhisper)	*Demonweb*
1	Troglodyte Curse Chanter (Virarr)	*Demonweb*
4	Gargoyles (vicious wrack abishai)	*Dungeons of Dread*

Treasure

All the treasure is heaped near the altar to Tiamat in the guild's temple. Consult your players' wish lists to find an appropriate magic item.

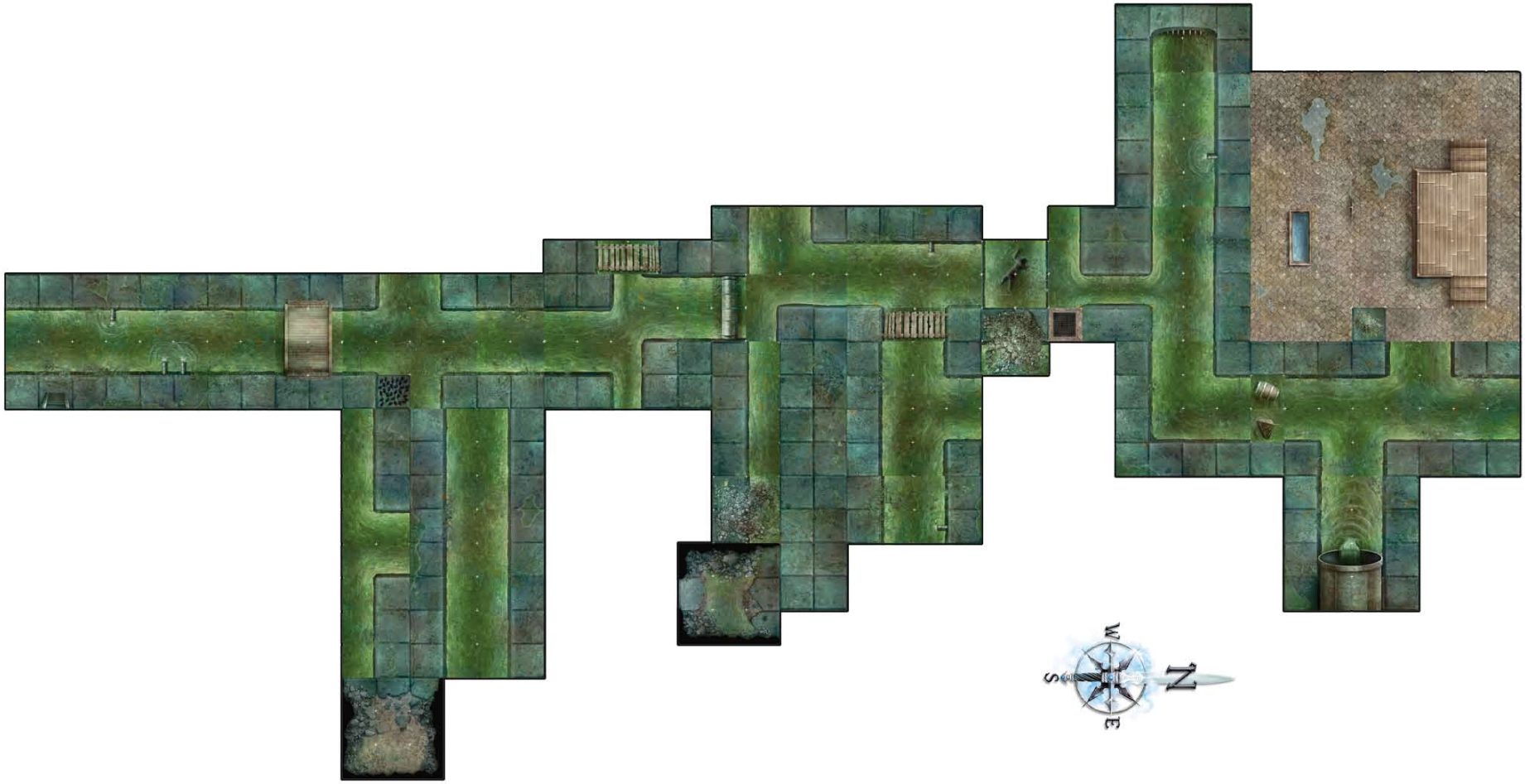
Encounter 8-1 Altar: 11th-level magic item (_____), 11 peridots worth 100 gp each, 1 jade statuette of a dancer inlaid with silver filigree worth 1,500 gp, and 900 gp.

Expanding the Delve

The threat of the Poisoned Shadows can be expanded easily from what was presented here and in *Dungeon Delve*. At the end of the previous delve, the party believed they have finally put an end to the brutal assassins guild operating out of the sewers below them, but they are wrong. A few members of the guild were on an assignment when the party attacked and returned only to find that their fellow murderers and cutthroats had been slain. Seething with anger, the group turns to Virarr, their cleric of Tiamat, who calls to his dark lady for vengeance. After sacrificing some of his wealth to her, the Dragon Queen grants Virarr a vision of those responsible, and the remaining assassins begin making life miserable for the PCs by targeting friends, family, business partners, pets, and other allies. The party is surrounded by death, and others quickly become fearful about what might become of them for associating with the PCs, so aid quickly dries up.

Locating the remains of the Poisoned Shadows in the sewers might take an entire adventure in itself. When expanding the lair in the sewers into a full-blown dungeon, add several more twists and turns, plus take advantage of three-dimensional spaces with intake and outtake pipes at different levels. Add more shadar-kai, advanced wererats, or even a berbalang. With more encounters, you could add oozes, slimes, or vermin that fill the sewers to harry the party as they search for their real foes.

Extra Monsters	
1st daily power used	Add 1 troll shade (already summoned) to Encounter 8-2.
3rd daily power used	Add 1 shadar-kai chainmaster to Encounter 8-2.
5th daily power used	Add 1 wrack abishai to Encounter 8-3.



Encounter 8–1: Old Friends

Encounter Level 7 (1,700 XP)

1 shadar-kai witch (W)
4 shadar-kai chainmasters (C)

Setup

The PCs have descended into yet another part of the sewers, but this time the Poisoned Shadows are waiting for them.

The PCs begin on the walkway near the ladder to the surface. The shadar-kai witch is hidden in the rubble alcove while the shadar-kai chainmasters are in the hallway in front of her, also hidden.

When the PCs descend the ladder, read:
The gloom of the sewer is overpowered only by the stench. Sewage flows from under the south wall toward an intersection. To the north, a strong wooden bridge crosses the stream at the edge of your vision. Rodents squeak in the darkness.

Perception Check
DC 14: *You see a small swarm of rats feasting on something to the north. It glows with a faint light.*
DC 19: *The quiet rattle of a chain against stone from the northeast suggests that you are not alone.*

Features of the Area

Illumination: The faint glow coming from the remains under the rat swarm offers only dim light. Other than sources of light the PCs might bring with them, there is no light. The shadar-kai have low-light vision and can see fine in dim illumination.

Rat Swarm: A group of normal rats swarm over the corpse of a homeless man who recently stumbled across the hideout of the Poisoned Shadows. The light emanates from a malfunctioning sunrod that the man carried, and its power is nearly spent. Anyone passing through this square risks angering the rats, causing them to attack: +5 vs. Reflex for 1d8 + 5 damage plus blinding sickness.

Sewage: Thick, murky sewage flows slowly through the tunnels. It is 5 feet deep in the tunnels with a 10-foot deep pool at any intersections. The areas filled with sewage can be waded through as though they are difficult terrain. Anyone totally submerged gains concealment. A DC 10 Athletics check is required to swim through the sewage and a DC 15 Athletics check is required to climb out of the sewage and onto a ledge.

Tactics

The shadar-kai chainmasters use their *dance of death* and gang up on the same targets if possible. They use their *shadow jaunt* to move in and out of position if the PCs are clustered in such a way that they cannot do so. The shadar-kai witch begins with her *beshadowed mind* and attacks a ranged attacker at the back of the party. She then uses her *deep shadow* and targets close enemies until her *beshadowed mind* recharges.

The Poisoned Shadows want to hit the party hard and kill one or two members, but their goal is not a straight-up fight. If it becomes clear that the party is gaining the upper hand, they do not hesitate to flee to the area featured in the next encounter. They seek the aid of the troll there.

4 Shadar-Kai Chainmasters (C) **Level 8 Skirmisher**
Medium shadow humanoid XP 350 each

Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
HP 84; **Bloodied** 42
AC 22; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 19
Speed 6; see also *dance of death* and *shadow jaunt*

⊕ **Spiked Chain** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 damage.

Dance of Death (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Necrotic, Weapon**
The shadar-kai chainmaster shifts 6 squares and makes 3 spiked chain attacks at any points during his move. He can attack a given enemy only once, but he deals 1d6 extra necrotic damage with each successful hit.

Shadow Jaunt (move; encounter) ✦ **Teleportation**
The shadar-kai chainmaster teleports 3 squares and becomes insubstantial until the start of his next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Skills Acrobatics +15, Stealth +15
Str 17 (+7) **Dex** 18 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 12 (+5) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 11 (+4)
Equipment leather armor, spiked chain

Shadar-Kai Witch (W) **Level 7 Controller**
Medium shadow humanoid XP 300

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision
HP 77; **Bloodied** 38
AC 21; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 19
Speed 6; see also *shadow jaunt*

⊕ **Blackfire Touch** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Necrotic**
+11 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 4 fire and necrotic damage.

Beshadowed Mind (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅ ⚅) ✦ **Necrotic**
Ranged 10; +11 vs. Will; 2d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target has no line of sight to anything more than 2 squares from it (save ends).

Deep Shadow (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ✦ **Necrotic**
Aura 2; thick, writhing shadows surround the shadar-kai witch. The witch and any other shadow creatures within the aura gain concealment. In addition, enemies that enter or start their turns within the aura take 5 necrotic damage, and enemies (including flying ones) also treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain. The shadar-kai witch can sustain the aura as a minor action. However, the effect ends if she uses *shadow jaunt* or moves more than half her speed on her turn.

Shadow Jaunt (move; encounter) ✦ **Teleportation**
The shadar-kai witch teleports 3 squares and becomes insubstantial until the start of her next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Skills Acrobatics +8, Arcana +12, Religion +12, Stealth +13
Str 13 (+4) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 13 (+4) **Int** 19 (+7) **Cha** 17 (+6)

Encounter 8–2: Shadow Boxing

Encounter Level 9 (2,050 XP)
Lake of Slumbers Obstacle (shaded area)

5 troll shades (T)
Snornaugh the shadow-warped troll (S)

Setup

As the party progresses farther into the den of the Poisoned Shadows, they come face to face with the lonely troll Snornaugh, who supplies muscle for the guild. Snornaugh has been tainted by the strange waters of the sewer and the rituals performed by Virarr, so he offers a surprise for even the most experienced adventurers. Due to his loneliness, he embraces the dark power to summon friends to entertain him.

The PCs are approaching from the south. Snornaugh begins in his niche, talking to one of the troll shades. The other four troll shades are not yet summoned, but appear once Snornaugh begins to summon them. The shaded area is part of the Lake of Slumbers obstacle.

When the characters proceed down the sewer, read:

To the north, sewage flows out of a number of large pipes in the walls to form a swirling morass. Flimsy bridges and slime-slicked pipes cross some of the rivers of sludge.

Perception Check

DC 8: *A deep voice whispers to the east, but no response can be heard.*

DC 14: *Strange dark colors swirl in the sludge. More than just sewage flows here.*

DC 19: *You can pick out black, blue, green, red, and white swirls in the sewage, and they shimmer with eldritch mist.*

Portraying the Monsters

Snornaugh is not especially bright, and he is lonely. The shadar-kai call on him only when they need to take advantage of his muscle, and while he stays with them, he is not especially loyal to them because he knows deep down that they are not his friends. The DM can take advantage of this situation while portraying Snornaugh during the combat.

First, he talks to the PCs constantly, seeking some brief interaction. He shouts at them, constantly asking questions.

- ✦ *"Why are you in Snornaugh home? You think he do good job decorating? You want come over for cake?"*
- ✦ *"Who are you? You bring Snornaugh good food?"*
- ✦ *"You want play game? Snornaugh like games. Games are squishy!"*
- ✦ *"You want be Snornaugh friend?"*

PCs who offer especially entertaining answers or who are inclined to converse with Snornaugh repeatedly are not attacked until Snornaugh deals with other foes. Snornaugh refrains from killing such PCs, preferring to render them unconscious instead, that he might revive them later and be "friends." If this delve is part of a campaign, consider adding a Diplomacy skill challenge here to avoid ending this combat prematurely.

Second, Snornaugh does not coordinate with the shadar-kai—if any are present. He uses them for flanking opportunities if convenient but makes no effort to save them from peril or endanger himself on their behalf; knowing they will treat him the same way. He also does not run with the shadar-kai if they flee from battle because he wants to protect what little he has in his ruined niche.

Tactics

Snornaugh is resting comfortably amid his few cheap possessions in his ruined niche when the PCs approach. If the PCs are not making any attempt to use Stealth, he hears the combat in "Old Friends" or hears their approach and moves to investigate. If the PCs are attempting to approach quietly, have them make Stealth checks against his passive Perception (DC 21). If the PCs are successful, they can catch Snornaugh by surprise. If the shadar-kai from the first encounter have fled here, Snornaugh is forewarned of the PCs' approach and they prepare an ambush.

Once combat begins, Snornaugh tries to limit the number of foes he must face at once, moving so only one or two PCs can reach him, preferably so he has cover from the rest of his foes or so his foes must cross the Lake of Slumbers reach him. He uses his minor action and an action point as soon as possible to call additional troll shades. He continues to use his minor action and move actions (when necessary) until he has summoned four additional troll shades. He tries to flank with his troll shades to gain the benefit of his sneak attack. If an enemy is an effective ranged combatant, he uses his *shadow blind* to limit that enemy's effectiveness.

Snornaugh is enraged that anyone wants to violate his home and so he fights to the death. The troll shades, being extensions of Snornaugh's will, also fight until destroyed.

5 Troll Shades (T)		**Level 11 Minion**
Large shadow animate		XP 150 each
Initiative +5	**Senses** Perception +5; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 23; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20		
Speed fly 8		
⨁ **Claw** (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +14 vs. AC; 9 damage.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** Giant	
Str 21 (+10)	**Dex** 11 (+5)	**Wis** 11 (+5)
Con 21 (+10)	**Int** 4 (+2)	**Cha** 6 (+3)

Snornaugh, the Shadow-Warped Troll (S)	**Level 9 Elite Brute**
Large shadow humanoid	XP 800

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision
HP 200; **Bloodied** 100; see also *troll healing*
Regeneration 10 (if Snornaugh takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of his next turn)
AC 22; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 19
Saving Throws +2
Speed 8
Action Points 1

Claw (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage; see also *frenzied strike*.

Double Attack (standard; at-will)
Snornaugh makes two claw attacks.

Frenzied Strike (free, when Snornaugh's attack bloodies an enemy; at-will)
Snornaugh makes a claw attack.

Shadow Blind (standard; encounter)
Ranged 5; +11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

Call Troll Shade (minor; 4/encounter) ✦ **Conjuration**
Snornaugh reaches into the shadow within and conjures a troll shade within 5 squares. The troll shade acts independently just after Snornaugh in the initiative order.

Sneak Attack
When Snornaugh flanks an enemy, he deals 2d6 extra damage on melee attacks against that enemy.

Troll Healing ✦ **Healing**
If Snornaugh is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, Snornaugh rises on his next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Giant
Skills Athletics +15

Str 22 (+10)	**Dex** 16 (+7)	**Wis** 14 (+6)
Con 20 (+9)	**Int** 5 (+1)	**Cha** 10 (+4)

Lake of Slumbers	**Level 10 Obstacle**
Hazard	XP 500

The sewage in the intersection swirls with dark blue, black, green, red, and white colors.

Hazard: When a living creature interacts with the water, the lake places it into a deep slumber.

Perception
✦ DC 16: The character notices the five different colors swirling in the sewage.

Trigger
Whenever a living creature with an Intelligence of 5 or higher touches or drinks from the Lake of Slumbers, the sewage makes an opportunity attack. The sewage attacks each round as long as the contact persists until it hits its target. Due to the rituals that have warped him, Snornaugh is immune to the effect of the Lake of Slumbers.

Attack ✦ **Psychic, Sleep**
Opportunity Action Melee
Attack: +15 vs. Will
Hit: The target falls unconscious (save ends). *Aftereffect:* The target is weakened and slowed (save ends both).

Features of the Area

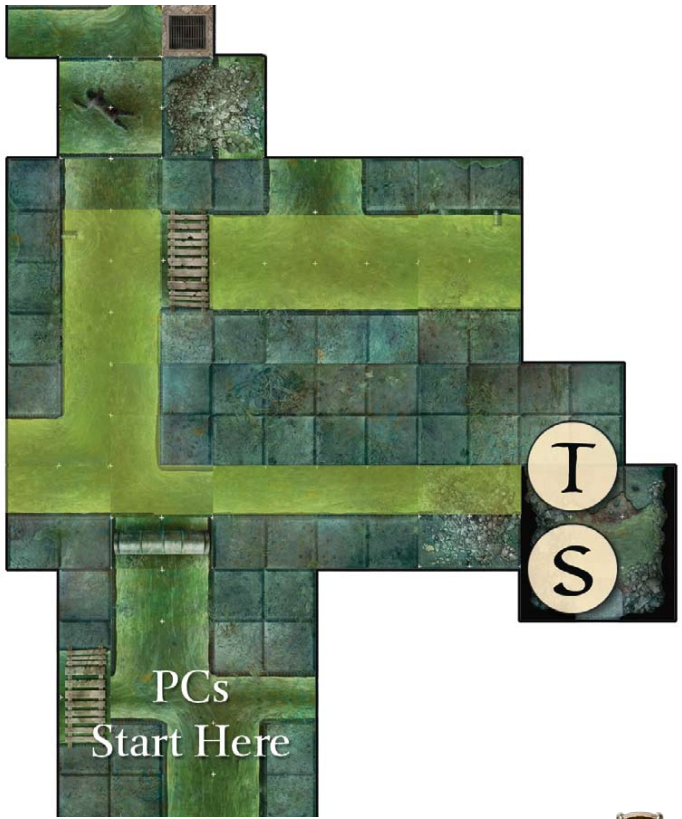
Illumination: There is no light in this room, but because of his darkvision, Snornaugh sees perfectly well.

Rubble: The northwestern and southeastern corners have areas where the ledge has crumbled from age. These 4 squares are difficult terrain, but a PC in the water can use this ramp made of rubble to pull out of the sewage without requiring an Athletics check to climb out.

Sewage: Thick, murky sewage flows slowly through the tunnels. It is 5 feet deep in the tunnels with a 10-foot deep pool at any intersections. The areas filled with sewage can be waded through as though they are difficult terrain. Anyone totally submerged gains concealment. A DC 10 Athletics check is required to swim through the sewage and a DC 15 Athletics check is required to climb out of the sewage and onto a ledge. Anyone in contact with the sewage in the shaded area is affected by the Lake of Slumbers obstacle.

Slippery Pipe: Sewer slime covers this pipe that crosses over the water, providing a perilous way across if the PC can succeed on a DC 25 Acrobatics check. Those that fail by 5 or more, and who fail a saving throw with a -2 penalty due to the slipperiness, fall into the water below, and they have to deal with the Lake of Slumbers obstacle.

Wooden Bridge: Two wooden bridges have been constructed of castoff wood to provide a way across the sewage, but their workmanship is poor at best. If two PCs stand on one at the same time (such as one PC ending movement on a bridge while a second PC moves across), the bridge collapses under the strain and both PCs are dropped into the water below.



Encounter 8–3: Coldblooded Vengeance

Encounter Level 11 (3,200 XP)

Virarr (V)
Eluron Bladewhisper (E)
4 vicious wrack abishai (A)

Setup

When the PCs arrive, Virarr is in the middle of another offering to Tiamat; he seeks further aid against the PCs that have so wronged him and his allies. Seeing the PCs' arrival as the answer to his prayer, he orders his followers to attack and seek the vengeance that they so desire. This battle pits the PCs against powerful foes who use their lair to their advantage.

Virarr is in front of the altar with his back to the entrance. The vicious wrack abishai are spread throughout the room, perched on various pipes and rock outcroppings, all at least 10 feet above the ground. Eluron Bladewhisper, the last of the guild's shadar-kai assassins, hides in the western corner near the intake pipe, watching the ceremony.

When the characters enter the room, read:

The passageway opens into a large room of pipes. A maze of small pipes on the ceiling as well as the western and northern walls drip into a stream created by two large pipes that encircle much of the room, only to drain out at the base of the western wall. Some debris bobs here and there in the sludge. A huge altar bearing a statue of a five-headed dragon dominates an island covered in candles across the sewage to the north, where a male dragonborn stands with his arms outstretched in supplication. A block of blue stone covered in runes and a pile of coins are also on the island.

Perception Check

DC 10: *Some of the debris floating in the slime does not appear to move in the current, but rather bobs in place.*

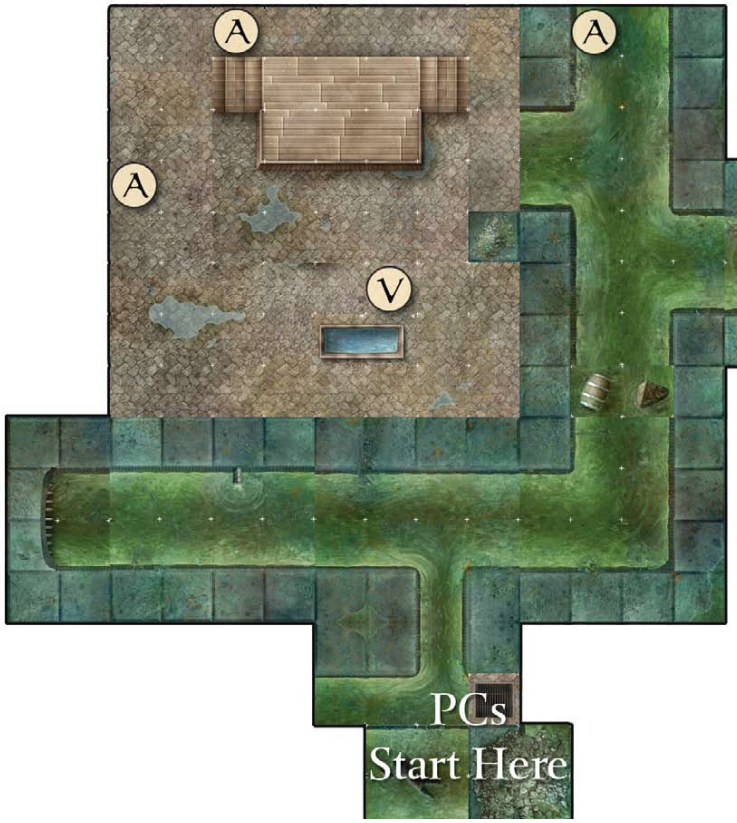
DC 16: *The blue stone block crackles with magical energy. At your approach, the dragonborn places his hand upon the stone and offers a toothy grin.*

DC 21: *You see a human-sized shadow move near the western wall. Someone hides there.*

Arcana Check (if the PC can see the blue stone block)

DC 16: *The markings on the blue stone are symbols of protection from the elements.*

DC 21: *The markings suggest that anyone who channels a portion of life force into the block while touching it can enhance the protection it offers.*



Features of the Area

Illumination: The altar to Tiamat is ablaze with dripping candles, bathing the island with light. The southern and eastern portions of the room are filled with dim illumination.

Altar of Tiamat: The altar of Tiamat has been drenched in the blood of the guild's enemies and infused with the Dragon Queen's unholy power, so it exudes an aura of benefit to worshipers. Followers within 4 squares of the altar (anywhere on the island), receive a +2 bonus to damage rolls. Any PC who is a follower of Bahamut, Tiamat's most hated foe, suffers her wrath and takes a –2 penalty to damage rolls while within 4 squares of the altar. If the statue is destroyed, this aura ends. The statue has AC 3, Reflex 3, Fortitude 15, and 200 hit points.

Blue Stone Block: Runes of protection cover the block of blue stone, and they crackle with mystical energy. Anyone adjacent to the stone or on it gains resist 5 against acid, cold, fire, lightning, and poison damage. As a minor action, A PC can spend a healing surge and increase this protection to resist 10 for 5 rounds. This enhanced benefit is lost if the PC loses contact with the stone. The block of stone can grant cover. The block is attached to the floor and cannot be moved. It loses all power if broken away from the floor.

Drain Pipe: The drain pipe in the base of the western area is blocked with

slime-covered bars too small for a Medium creature to fit through, but Small creatures can squeeze inside with a DC 19 Acrobatics check. The current carries those who squeeze through away unless they sacrifice a move action to hold onto the bars. While behind the bars, the PC gains cover.

Floating Debris: A barrel and a crate have been affixed by chains to the bottom of the sewage trough. They bounce and bob but stay relatively stable despite the current. A DC 20 Acrobatics (balance) check is required to move through each square. Due to the slime and motion, if the check is failed by 5 or more, the PC falls into the sewage.

Pipe Walls: The western and northern walls, as well as the ceiling, are covered in pipes that make it easy to climb. The walls can be climbed with a DC 5 Athletics check, while a PC can climb across the ceiling with a DC 15 Athletics. The large pipes on the northern and eastern walls are large enough to hold two Medium creatures. These large pipes are 10 feet from the ground.

Sewage: Thick, murky sewage flows swiftly around the island with the altar. It is 10 feet deep and moves toward the southwest drain pipe. Anyone in the sewage is pushed 2 squares toward the pipe at the start of the round. A PC can prevent this movement in future rounds by sacrificing a move action to hold onto the side. Anyone totally submerged gains concealment. A DC 14 Athletics check is required to swim through the sewage and a DC 19 Athletics check is required to climb out of the sewage and onto a ledge.

Treasure Pile: A pile of coins and gems lies near the altar, awaiting sacrifice to Tiamat. This square is difficult terrain and anyone standing in this square receives a –2 penalty to saving throws to avoid being forcibly moved (such as off the ledge into the sewage).

Tactics

Virarr sees the party's arrival as the chance to take his divinely granted vengeance. He moves next to the blue stone block to take advantage of its protective wards, and he uses *maws of Tiamat*, followed by *breath of Tiamat* or *forking tongue* on subsequent rounds.If a PC approaches him, he employs *smite the bold* on that character.

The vicious black abishai begin by using their *acidic burst* on as many foes as possible, hoping to blind all their enemies. They then choose one or two blinded enemies to focus on, using hit and run tactics, retreating to the ceiling or the large drain pipes on the northern and eastern walls. Once there, they *shadow meld* and move into position to use their *deadly ambush* on injured foes.

Eluron Bladewhisper tries to attack from her position in the corner (she is hidden). She attacks foes that cannot see her to increase the chance they stay blinded. During the battle, she watches for an opportunity to use *finishing move*, using *shadow jaunt* to get to a bloodied foe if she needs to.

All of the creatures here work to keep the PCs away from Virarr and the blue stone block.

Out for vengeance, Virarr and the wrack abishai fight to the death and pursue the PCs if they run. Eluron is more practical and flees the battle if Virarr is incapacitated, at least two of the abishai are down and victory appears unlikely. She does not pursue foes if she has other enemies to engage, unless it is obviously to her advantage to follow.

Eluron Bladewhisper (E) **Level 7 Elite Lurker**
Medium shadow humanoid, shadar-kai XP 600

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 120; **Bloodied** 60; see also *veil of shadows*
AC 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 16
Saving Throws +2
Speed 5; see also *shadow jaunt*
Action Points 1

⊕ **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage; see also *gloomstrike*.

↯ **Finishing Move** (free action, when an adjacent enemy becomes bloodied; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**
Eluron Bladewhisper targets the enemy that has just become bloodied: +12 vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 damage, ongoing 10 damage, and the target grants combat advantage (save ends both); see also *gloomstrike*.

↯ **Shadow Throw** (minor 1/round; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 5 damage, and the target slides 2 squares and is knocked prone. Eluron can make a Stealth check to become hidden from the thrown enemy.

Gloomstrike
If Eluron Bladewhisper hits a target that can't see her, the target is blinded until the end of Eluron Bladewhisper's next turn.

Shadow Jaunt (move; encounter) ✦ **Teleportation**
Eluron Bladewhisper teleports 3 squares and becomes insubstantial until the start of her next turn.

Veil of Shadows (move; at-will) ✦ **Illusion**
Eluron Bladewhisper turns invisible until the end of her turn and moves up to her speed. Eluron Bladewhisper cannot use this power while bloodied.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Acrobatics +14, Stealth +14

Str 17 (+6)	**Dex** 20 (+8)	**Wis** 15 (+5)
Con 12 (+4)	**Int** 10 (+3)	**Cha** 11 (+3)

Equipment chainmail, greatsword

Virarr (V) **Level 11 Elite Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid XP 1,200

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +8
HP 228; **Bloodied** 114; see also *dragonborn fury*
AC 25; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23
Saving Throws +2
Speed 5
Action Points 1

Morningstar (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+16 vs. AC (+17 while bloodied); 1d10 + 5 damage.

Smite the Bold (minor 1/round; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+16 vs. AC (+17 while bloodied); 1d10 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.

Forking Tongue (standard; at-will) ✦ **Implement, Radiant**
Ranged 5; two targets; +15 vs. Reflex (+16 while bloodied); 2d6 + 3 radiant damage, and one ally within sight gains 6 temporary hit points or makes a saving throw.

Breath of Tiamat (standard; at-will) ✦ **Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Poison**
Close blast 3; targets enemies; +14 vs. Reflex (+14 while bloodied); 2d6 + 4 acid, cold, fire, lightning, and poison damage.

Maws of Tiamat (standard; encounter) ✦ **Acid, Cold, Fire, Implement, Lightning, Poison**
Close burst 4; targets enemies; +15 vs. AC (+14 while bloodied); 3d10 + 4 acid, cold, fire, lightning, and poison damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

Dragonborn Fury (only while bloodied)
A dragonborn gains a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Arcana +10, Religion +10, Intimidate +13
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 18 (+9)
Con 18 (+9) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 12 (+6)
Equipment scale armor, bastard sword, holy symbol of Tiamat

4 Vicious Wrack Abishai (A) **Level 8 Lurker**
Medium immortal magical beast XP 350 each

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 69; **Bloodied** 34
Regeneration 5
AC 22; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 21
Resist 5 acid
Speed 6, fly 6, overland flight 12

Sting (standard; at-will) ✦ **Acid**
+13 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 acid damage; see also *deadly ambush*.

Acidic Burst (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Acid**
Close burst 1; +11 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 acid damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and blinded (save ends).

Shadow Meld (standard; at-will) ✦ **Illusion**
The vicious wrack abishai turns invisible and moves 6 squares. It remains invisible until the end of its next turn.

Deadly Ambush
The vicious wrack abishai deals 1d10 extra damage to a target that cannot see it, and that target is dazed (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Stealth +12
Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+5)
Con 15 (+6) **Int** 11 (+4) **Cha** 20 (+9)

Conclusion

If the PCs kill or capture all the remaining members of the Poisoned Shadows, their troubles might be over, but if any escape, the evil guild goes on to recruit more followers and further nurture their hatred and desire for revenge. The nightmare never ends until the PCs catch every last one.

About the Author

Greg Marks is an evil mastermind directing his criminal army of precocious felines from the birthplace of gaming: Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. He and his cat minions have contributed to the *City of Stormreach*™ supplement, written numerous adventures for the RPGA, contributed repeatedly to previous incarnations of Dragon® *Magazine*, and cowritten several products for Fantasy Flight Games' *Midnight* setting.

Haven of the Bitter Glass

by Kevin Kulp

An adventure for 12th-level characters

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In their cities and citadels on the Astral Sea, the githyanki tasked with ensuring success for the upcoming war struggled with a problem: How best to handle communication between different heads of the vast githyanki army?

SCALES OF WAR™

"Haven of the Bitter Glass" is an adventure for five 12th-level characters. The characters should gain about one and a half levels worth of experience in the course of the adventure. This means that if you're running this adventure as part of the Scales of War Adventure Path, you're adventurers should reach 14th level by the end of the adventure. This is the ninth adventure in the Scales of War Adventure Path; you can run this adventure as the sequel to "Beyond the Mottled Tower," the eighth adventure in Scales of War, or adapt it to run as part of your own campaign.

In this adventure, the heroes must thwart a sophisticated and manipulative githyanki spy whose diplomatic skills have assured him safety within a human city. In the process, they can save potential githzerai allies from extermination, forge an alliance, infiltrate high society, and distupt the lines of githyanki communication—which will change the course of war.

BACKGROUND

In their cities and citadels on the Astral Sea, the githyanki tasked with ensuring success for the upcoming war struggled with a problem: How best to handle communication between different heads of the vast githyanki army? The new githyanki overlord, Emperor Zetch'r'r, was not as magically adept as the late Queen Vlaakith, and the mortal world was vast; it would only be through surprise, strength, and communication that they would carry the day and annihilate their enemies.

Five years ago, an obscure githyanki scholar named Kle'th found the answer.

Four hundred years ago, the Astral Sea had been disturbed by a human-crafted artifact called the Bitter Glass, a huge arcane focus in a human city called Auger that aided in communication. It created astral turbulence when it functioned. Under the rule of the now-deceased Lich Queen Vlaakith CLVII, the githyanki did what they always did when something disturbed them; in a night of fire and death, the city of Auger was virtually annihilated by a githyanki strike force mounted on dragons. The Bitter Glass was destroyed, buried beneath dozens of feet of mud and rubble, and few non-githyanki survived who remembered what it did. The githyanki considered the problem solved.

When the githyanki set their invasion plans in motion, Kle'th suspected that this long-lost human device might be the tool they needed to organize their armies, even though it triggered evil dreams of self-reflection in those who encountered its psychic effluvia. The githyanki dispatched a subtle and accomplished spy named Telicanthus to the human city of Sayre, which was built over the ruins of Auger. Telicanthus was soon able to ascertain that the Bitter Glass existed deep beneath the city, but it would take a major excavation to find and use it. He settled in Sayre for the long haul, using an unusual method for keeping himself safe in a human city. Uncharacteristically for a githyanki, he adopted the guise of a charming, aristocratic merchant, making himself well known and the center of the city's social scene.

The process was calculated and effective. Telicanthus arrived with vast amounts of money, positioning himself as an exotic noble who sought refuge from the evil of his own race. He made sure that he seemed cultured, mysterious, and important. He gave beautiful gifts and threw grand parties with exclusive guest lists, spending his money freely on those who befriended him. Within six months he was the most well known of Sayre's social elite, close friends with the governor, and a prized member of the city's most prominent citizens. He used this influence to buy himself the privacy and security he needed to pursue his true agenda: securing the Bitter Glass.

Telicanthus then purchased the mansion sitting over the long-buried Bitter Glass and surreptitiously smuggled in githyanki to excavate Sayre's undercity in search of the missing glass globe. He found it within months, and was unsurprised to find it shattered. Socially secure and with most of the city's elite convinced that he was above reproach, he quietly brought in Kle'th to put the Bitter Glass back in operating order. Unfortunately, rebuilding the Bitter Glass was beyond the capabilities of the githyanki scholar. But in his long and thorough research into the githyanki's communication difficulties, Kle'th had also read about the powerful and ancient island nation of Nefelus, home to sages who had fostered a trading relationship with the city of Auger in ages past. Kle'th learned that the potent scholars of Nefelus had procured the rituals and secrets behind the construction of the Bitter Glass, and informed Telicanthus of his research.

A team of elite githyanki agents was assembled, and the group struck out for Nefelus. There, they managed to find some of the original plans and rituals behind the construction of the Bitter Glass, but Telicanthus's strike team was discovered before they could gather everything they needed. They found that the Nefelese had since improved on the original design of Auger, but Telicanthus's team wasn't able to determine the specifics. Only Telicanthus himself made it out alive, but the information he brought back was sufficient for Kle'th to repair the original Glass and render it functional once more. The activation of

the rebuilt Bitter Glass marked the beginning of the githyanki invasion.

At the start of this adventure, Telicanthus has had the Bitter Glass functioning for six months. Kle'th has found a method for eliminating the astral backlash through a ritual that must be constantly performed, and Telicanthus now stands at the center of a communication web that links every single githyanki general (and several important spies) in the mortal realm. So long as Telicanthus and the Bitter Glass remain unhindered, every githyanki army has near-instant communication with every other, allowing them to coordinate their attacks with deadly precision. If the mortal races want a hope of winning the upcoming war, they need to discover and destroy this asset . . . but first they need to learn that it even exists.

Adventure Synopsis

In a previous adventure, "Den of the Destroyer," the PCs freed the mysterious deva Amyria from her imprisonment in the form of a platinum sword. They have not heard from her since she parted ways with the adventurers in Overlook.

If you played through "Beyond the Mottled Tower," the PCs have just finished a momentous adventure, chasing down and destroying Sarshan in his tower within the Elemental Chaos. While this adventure assumes that the characters have returned to Overlook, the opening is easily altered to a location of your choice.

The adventurers have had at least an evening to rest and recover after returning from their battle with Sarshan; you might wish to give them additional downtime if they have items to craft, rituals to perform, errands to complete, or allies to mourn. When you're ready to begin, the PCs are summoned to the walls of Overlook's western gates where a mysterious flying ship was sighted heading for the city.

This ship, the githyanki war galleon *Conqueror*, has crashed near the southwestern wall by the time the PCs arrive. The only person on board is an injured githzerai scout named Tokk'it. He will announce that his race is the sworn enemy of the githyanki and that their last fortress in the area is under attack from githyanki forces; he stole the githyanki ship to try and summon help from the Heroes of Elsir Vale (the adventurers) before the fortress of Akma'ad falls. The ship can manage one more trip back to the site of the battle, and Tokk'it is ready to start the trip back immediately with whoever is willing to come. During the journey, Tokk'it admits that an important meeting of githzerai leaders was occurring at Akma'ad, and that their lives are at grave risk. Somehow the githyanki learned of the gathering and communicated it to a group of nearby mercenaries with lightning speed (using the Bitter Glass), and the leaders were ambushed almost as soon as they all arrived.

After fighting a githyanki recovery team sent to reclaim the *Conqueror*, the PCs reach the besieged fortress, where their actions decide the outcome of the fight and the number of githzerai survivors. They have multiple options for affecting the raging battle below. If they succeed in routing the githyanki, the PCs learn that several of the githzerai leaders were slain during the battle and the remaining leader is hostile toward humans. The surviving githzerai plan to go to the nearby city of Sayre, so far untouched by war, and they invite the PCs to accompany them if they wish to play a part in the upcoming war council called, unknown to the PCs, by their friend Amyria.

What Is an Adventure Path?

An Adventure Path is a connected series of adventures that comprises an entire D&D campaign, from the heroes' humble beginnings at 1st level to their epic triumphs at the pinnacle of level 30. These adventures cover all three tiers of play: heroic, paragon and epic. Each tier is covered by roughly six adventures, meaning that the entire adventure path consist of eighteen adventures. Each adventure covers between one and three. We will also point you toward suggested side quests to help supplement XP, assuring that your PCs are the correct level to tackle each adventure.

"Haven of the Bitter Glass" is the second adventure in the paragon tier. The PCs' exploits are reaching out and affecting the world beyond their immediate surroundings, and the actions of the heroes in this adventure have some far-reaching consequences in the coming war. Be sure to emphasize this over the course of play.

This Adventure Path is meant to be a complete D&D campaign. That means we're making some assumptions about the history and mythology of the world as the adventures progress, such as Queen Vlaakith's death (an event we've adopted from a *Dungeon* adventure, "The Lich Queen's Beloved," from issue #100). You'll see some classic heroes and villains from D&D history, as well as great ideas from past issues of *Dungeon* and print sources.

En route, a surviving githyanki assassin attacks them and possibly reveals that one of the surviving githzerai is a spy responsible for Akma'ad's destruction.

In Sayre, the PCs meet a local githyanki celebrity named Telicanthus, who lauds them as the Heroes of Elsir Vale and invites them to tea. The githzerai accompanying the PCs don't fare as well, since locals consider them, oddly, evil and thieving undesirables. They are initially refused entry to the city unless the PCs intervene and vouch for them. In the abandoned warehouse where the githzerai in Sayre are forced to stay, the PCs meet Amyria once again, and she asks for their help in organizing the fractious githzerai. In doing so, the PCs discover a major githyanki plot in the city involving Telicanthus. A divination spell points them toward a long-forgotten library beneath a ruined temple of Ioun. The PCs are attacked by a band of "beggars" en route, and they find out the hard way that the temple of Ioun is now a temple of Tiamat instead.

With clues and information that Telicanthus is maintaining a magical communication network for the githyanki armies, the PCs have the opportunity to infiltrate his mansion and look for proof, perhaps when they are invited to formal tea. Confronting him directly is sure to end poorly, as Telicanthus has Sayre's most important citizens as political allies. Secretly searching his mansion will reveal roughly dug tunnels that lead to the ruin of a tower, and the Bitter Glass itself. With proof of hidden githyanki troops and traitorous activities, the PCs can publicly confront Telicanthus with their evidence and finish him once and for all.

Preparing for Adventure

"Haven of the Bitter Glass" has an unusual villain, since Telicanthus is a foe who cannot be simply attacked if the PCs want to reach their goals. That is to say, simply attacking Telicanthus doesn't solve the PCs' overall problem (the existence of the Bitter Glass). He also has powerful and influential friends who are also good and kind allies of the PCs. Simply killing him on the basis of a suspicion will be considered murder by the locals, and considerable effort will go into branding the PCs as outlaws and arresting them.

For the best effect, you will want to play Telicanthus as extremely friendly and charismatic, keeping in mind his tendency to look down on githzerai even when it isn't in his best interest. Telicanthus isn't a traditional gloating and monologuing bad guy; he's a witty and clever socialite who uses social expectations to his own advantage. Play him as such. He's almost impossible to force into combat unless his life is on the line, and even then he's likely to run while shouting that he's being attacked by murderers. His foremost concern of any action is "How will this affect peoples' view of me?" because his mission for Emperor Zetch'r'r is more important than his own petty vendettas.

Telicanthus doesn't appear until after the PCs arrive in Sayre, so to start the adventure quickly be sure to look over the different portions of the battle of Akma'ad and understand how they fit together. After the large battle the adventure takes place mostly in the city of Sayre, so you'll want to be familiar with the feel of the city and its different neighborhoods. You will also want to be familiar with the agendas and personalities of the arguing githzerai on page 58. Finally, review the descriptions of the Coalition members on page 63 before running The Coalition skill challenge (page 100).

The Quests

"Haven of the Bitter Glass" allows PCs to earn quest XP in several places. Provided here is a list of the adventure's quests, along with their XP.

Major Quest—Uniting the Githzerai
The PCs must unite the arguing and disparate groups of githzerai taking shelter in Sayre, convincing them to band together and help defend the human lands.
Reward: 4,000 XP.

Major Quest—Destroying the Bitter Glass
The PCs must destroy or capture the Bitter Glass, preventing the githyanki from continuing their communication rituals.
Reward: 4,000 XP.

Minor Quest—Defeat the Githyanki at Akma'ad
Through combat and tactics, the PCs must prevent the githyanki from overrunning the fortress of Akma'ad.
Reward: 800 XP.

Minor Quest—Publicly Discredit Telicanthus
The PCs must publicly discredit the githyanki spy Telicanthus, humiliating him in front of his allies and supporters.
Reward: 800 XP.

Treasure Preparation

As with previous installments of the Scales of War campaign, "Haven of the Bitter Glass" makes use of the parcel system of treasure rewards as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The characters should accumulate seventeen parcels by the end of the adventure. You can supply these treasures in whatever way you wish, but the following sidebar presents the most likely encounters to bear treasure. During your preparation, assign parcels from those that follow to the encounters in the spaces provided. Use the players' wish lists to come up with magic items for the first eight parcels. (Consider saving at least one or two of the highest level magic items for later in the adventure, after the PCs have obtained 13th level.)

Treasure Parcels

Parcel A: _____, D1 (on the githyanki lancers).
Parcel B: _____, A1 (on the githyanki dragonknight).
Parcel C: _____, A2 (on the githyanki captain).
Parcel D: _____, A3 (loot from dead githyanki, or as a reward for saving Akma'ad).
Parcel E: _____, A4 (loot from dead githyanki, or as a reward for saving Akma'ad).
Parcel F: _____, A5 (loot from dead githyanki, or as a reward for saving Akma'ad).
Parcel G: _____, A5 (loot from dead githyanki, or as a reward for saving Akma'ad).
Parcel H: _____, T5 (on the person of the Filth King).
Parcel I: _____, T6 (in the mound of treasure guarded by the coin golem).
Parcel J: _____, T6 (in the mound of treasure guarded by the coin golem).
Parcel K: _____, T6 (in the mound of treasure guarded by the coin golem).
Parcel L: _____, T6 (in the mound of treasure guarded by the coin golem).
Parcel M: _____, T8 (on the person of the undead librarian).
Parcel N: _____, U10 (On the person of the githyankis performing a ritual inside the Bitter Glass).
Parcel O: _____, Z1 (the Final Encounter, on the person of Telicanthus or his secretary Pennel).
Parcel P: _____, Z1 (the Final Encounter, on the person of Telicanthus or his secretary Pennel).
Parcel Q: _____, Z1 (the Final Encounter, on the person of Telicanthus or his secretary Pennel).

Based on the guidelines in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, the following parcels can go in the lines above. Consult the wish lists your players gave you for the first eight parcels, making the items appear to be githyanki manufacture where appropriate.

Parcel 1: Magic item, level 17.
Parcel 2: Magic item, level 16.
Parcel 3: Magic item, level 16.
Parcel 4: Magic item, level 15.
Parcel 5: Magic item, level 15.
Parcel 6: Magic item, level 14.
Parcel 7: Magic item, level 14.
Parcel 8: Magic item, level 13.
Parcel 9: A striking gold statuette of a five-headed dragon with gems for eyes, worth 7,200 gp.
Parcel 10: 7,000 gp in a huge pile of gold, silver, and copper coins.
Parcel 11: A leather riding harness studded with fourteen rubies, worth 500 gp each (7,000 gp total).
Parcel 12: Three *potions of vitality*; one 1,000-gp diamond; a small exquisitely painted portrait of Auglos, founder of Auger, worth 400 gp.
Parcel 13: One *potion of vitality*.
Parcel 14: 2,000 gp.
Parcel 15: Eight exquisitely crafted stained glass globes, each showing a different scene from the late Lich Queen Vlaakith's rule, worth 1,000 gp each (8,000 gp total); and 1,500 gp.
Parcel 16: A crystal and silver hourglass with sand made from gem dust, worth 8,500 gp.
Parcel 17: 5,700 gp.

What You Need to Play

This adventure contains everything you need to play, including background information, setup, encounters and maps. You may wish to review any appropriate Dungeons & Dragons 4th Edition rules before play begins. Make sure you read at least the opening sections and initial encounters before starting. Also review Telicanthus's description on page 56, as he's a somewhat unusual villain who uses the social pressure of a lawful society to keep himself safe from attack.

Starting the Adventure

The adventure begins once the PCs have had a chance to recover from the events in "Beyond the Mottled Tower," most likely in the city of Overlook. The DM should make sure that the PCs have no other pressing tasks before starting the adventure; once the PCs are contacted, they will need to leave almost immediately.

Events begin when the PCs are interrupted by an exhausted, panting soldier from Overlook's city militia. The soldier, a human named Coggin, has been sprinting through the city along with nearly twenty other Overlook soldiers trying to find them. Between gasps for breath, the overwhelmed (and slightly starstruck) guard tells them why he's been sent.

Read the following aloud:

"My name's Coggin, sirs. I was sent to find you. The guard captain asked that you report immediately to the West Gate. One of our scouts to the south reported that there's some sort of a flying warship headed for the city. It's armed, and it isn't built by any race they recognized. After how you've helped the city so much, the captain would like you on hand in case there's trouble. Sirs."

Depending on where the PCs are in Overlook when the messenger finds them, it may take them some time to get to the West Gate. They will be passed through checkpoints by any guards they encounter, all of whom recognize the heroes on sight. A few minutes before the PCs reach the West Gate, they hear a loud scraping and creaking noise, like the sound of heavy wooden timbers being dragged roughly across the ground. This is the sound of the airship landing—crashing, really—outside the city.

Conqueror Down

When the heroes reach a point that overlooks the west and southwest of the city, they see that a flying galleon named the *Conqueror* has ignominiously crashed into the war-torn turf beyond the city. The mast has an improvised white flag hanging limply from it. The galleon has skidded to a halt on the ground, and the ship looks to have already been in a war. Patches of the vessel have been charred by intense fire, with other sections badly damaged as if struck by large weapons. A DC 21 Arcana check identifies the vessel as something native to the Astral Sea, while a DC 23 Nature check identifies the ship as githyanki construction. A second successful DC 23 Arcana check reveals that the damage on the ship is similar to that which would have been inflicted by red dragon's breath.

A lone humanoid figure is visible on board, waiting by the rail. Citizens outside the city are fleeing from the wreck as quickly as possible, and the adventurers can hear their screams easily from here. Every guard nearby has a crossbow trained on the humanoid.

With the PCs' arrival, the local guard captain—a female human named Captain Jerra Dauralis—asks them to accompany her down to speak with the ship. It takes only a few minutes to descend the steps and exit the city's gate. Captain Dauralis is clearly rattled and will defer to the PCs in the ensuing encounter.

Adapting the Adventure

"Haven of the Bitter Glass" is designed with five players in mind. You can easily adjust the adventure for larger parties by adding a few more monsters and increasing the amount of treasure, using the guidelines presented in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. When adding monsters, keep your changes simple; when possible, just add one monster whose level equals the encounter level for each additional PC. You can similarly make the adventure easier for fewer than five players, reducing the number of monsters and the amount of treasure.

This adventure is designed for 12th-level characters, who will be 14th level by the time the adventure finishes. If your party is less than 12th level at the start, you might wish to use a side adventure or two to give them experience before starting "Haven of the Bitter Glass." If not, a larger than normal 11th-level party can play through this adventure, but be sure to give them an opportunity for extended rests when feasible so that they have a better chance of surviving. For higher-level groups, you will want to add a corresponding number of monsters and treasure to ensure that the group is challenged. You might also need to adjust the target DCs in skill challenges using the Skill Check Difficulty Class table on page 61 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. With some adjustment, you should be able to run this adventure for groups of three and eight players, and for characters between 10th and 15th level.

Approaching the Ship

A lone githzerai male stands aboard the ship, managing to look both exhausted and anxious at the same time. He carries no weapons and makes no threatening moves. This is Tokk'it, the only githzerai to escape the githyanki siege on his fortress.

Roleplaying Encounter: Meeting Tokk'it (page 72).

On Board the Conqueror

Once the PCs are on board the githyanki war galleon, Tokk'it will waste no time getting the ship back in the air and pointed toward Akma'ad. He does this by moving to the bridge and standing in the ritual circle, taking the wheel, and concentrating. The sails rise and the ship begins to right itself, taking to the air with a screeching groan. It tacks around in a circle and gains altitude as it heads to the southwest.

The *Conqueror* is specially built to be a troop transport carrying as many soldiers as possible, so tasks handled by normal sailors are instead accomplished by the psychic echoes of possessed githyanki sailors. These echoes have no personality or ability to attack, and manifest themselves as translucent shimmers as they do sailing-related work ordered by anyone standing inside a runic circle on the ship's bridge. The ghostly crew ceases functioning if this circle is ever destroyed.

Tokk'it spends his time talking about githyanki and githzerai if anyone stays in the bridge with him. He explains that he does not have much influence within the monastery and that he hopes that his actions today have some impact on his status. He will also discuss his affection for a githzerai female named Gallia, who he hopes is still alive despite the fact that she dissolved their relationship several months ago. While he may not say it explicitly, it's clear that he is still in love with Gallia, and does not understand why she left him. He believes it is because he has not integrated well into the monastery's routine.

In the Event of a Delay

This adventure assumes that the PCs quickly join Tokk'it in returning to the fortress of Akma'ad. If they delay for more than an hour before departing, the two githyanki lancers on their dragons arrive at Overlook and scout from the sky before attempting to steal back their galleon. Adapt the tactical encounter D1. Repossession Team (page 74) if this occurs. If the PCs delay for more than 3 hours before departing, any PCs arriving at Akma'ad will discover the fortress empty—with the exception of the hundreds of dead githzerai and githyanki littering the ground. Without the PCs to help the githzerai, the githyanki were able to breach the fortress and kill nearly all its inhabitants, leaving only a handful able to escape and join their brethren in Sayre. Adjust later encounters accordingly, assuming that Odos and Gallia were among the handful of survivors who fled to Sayre. This refusal to help may sully the heroes' reputation amongst people who hear of it. In addition, any checks made to influence Odos (including those made in The Coalition skill challenge on page 100) are made with a -5 penalty.

If the PCs choose not to travel to Akma'ad for some reason, three days later they receive a Sending ritual call from Amyria, asking them to join her in Sayre. Continue the adventure with the arrival of the characters in Sayre.

It is during the voyage that Tokk'it explains how important it is that they win this fight.

Read the following aloud:

"This githyanki attack could not have come at a worse time. Most of the githzerai at Akma'ad right now are visitors. Our abbot is hosting a meeting of extremely important religious and political leaders. Kath'ik from the Monastery of Nine Stones, Most Exalted Odos from the House of Reprisal, Wellik the Elder from the Tower of Dancing Flame ... all leaders that my people look up to. I think they are deciding who will lead us in the upcoming war, and how involved we will be in aiding your world."

The conclusion is inescapable: Help the githzerai, and maybe gain githzerai allies to help during the war. If asked where githzerai are from, that they would view the mortal realm as the PCs' world but not their own, Tokk'it can reveal the basic information about githzerai from *Monster Manual* (pages 130–131).

A Flying Ship

A normal airship costs 85,000 gp, and the *Conqueror* is better than most since it doesn't require a crew. The *Conqueror* is a plot device to quickly move the PCs to Akma'ad; the adventure assumes that the ship is badly in need of repair and won't last much longer than the trip. The *Conqueror*'s psychic helm has been badly strained by moving the damaged vessel at high speed, and any damage the ship incurs during the fight against the githyanki commander's ship at Akma'ad will be enough to disrupt the enchantments that keep it aloft.

The Conqueror, Githyanki Airship
Gargantuan Vehicle

HP 400 (currently 90) **Space** 6 squares by 23 squares
Cost 125,000 gp
AC 4; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 4
Speed 0, fly 12 (hover), overland flight 15

Pilot
The pilot must stand in a ritual circle in front of the control wheel, located forward in the bridge.

Crew
The *Conqueror* does not require additional crew, with the role of crew being handled by psychic echoes of possessed humanoids.

Ramming Prow
The *Conqueror* can ram targets. When it does so, the *Conqueror* takes no damage from Large or smaller targets, and only half normal damage from Huge or larger targets. Passengers take no damage unless the target is Huge or larger. Then they take half normal damage.

Ballista
The ship is armed with two ballistas on its main deck. These are usable by PCs.

Load
Fifty Medium creatures; thirty tons of cargo.

Out of Control
The *Conqueror* moves forward at half speed. Each round, it has a 50% chance of descending. It descends 5 squares for the first 10 rounds it is out of control. After 10 rounds, it descends 10 squares per round. If the ship hits the ground after descending more than 20 squares, it is destroyed.

Decks
The *Conqueror* has four decks: an exterior observation platform, the topmost main deck, the middle crew deck, and a lower cargo hold.

Soul Helm
The githyanki soul helm located in area C18 controls propulsion, buoyancy, and psychic crew. This object requires regular infusions of possessed souls in order to operate, something that can only be done in the docks of Tu'narath, the githyanki capital city on the Astral Sea. If the soul helm is destroyed, the ship's psychic crew and ability to fly fades after 5 hours. The soul helm has AC 4, Fortitude 20, Reflex 4, and 100 hp.

The Conqueror

This githyanki war galleon was constructed outside the githyanki city of Tu'narath, and (other than the recent battle damage) shows all the signs of a new vessel: shining wood, new fittings, and few personal belongings on board. With a main deck that has room for almost fifty troops to stand and fight, it is designed primarily for the transport of troops.

C1. Main Deck

The main deck has an abundance of loose ropes, traditionally used by githyanki troops when they board another vessel. They are also useful for PCs fighting on deck who don't wish to be accidentally knocked overboard. The two ballistas here can be used by PCs using the rules from the "Ballista" sidebar.

C2. Forecastle

This raised area has one ballista and overlooks the ramming spike.

C3. Sterncastle

This raised area has one ballista.

C4. Crenellations

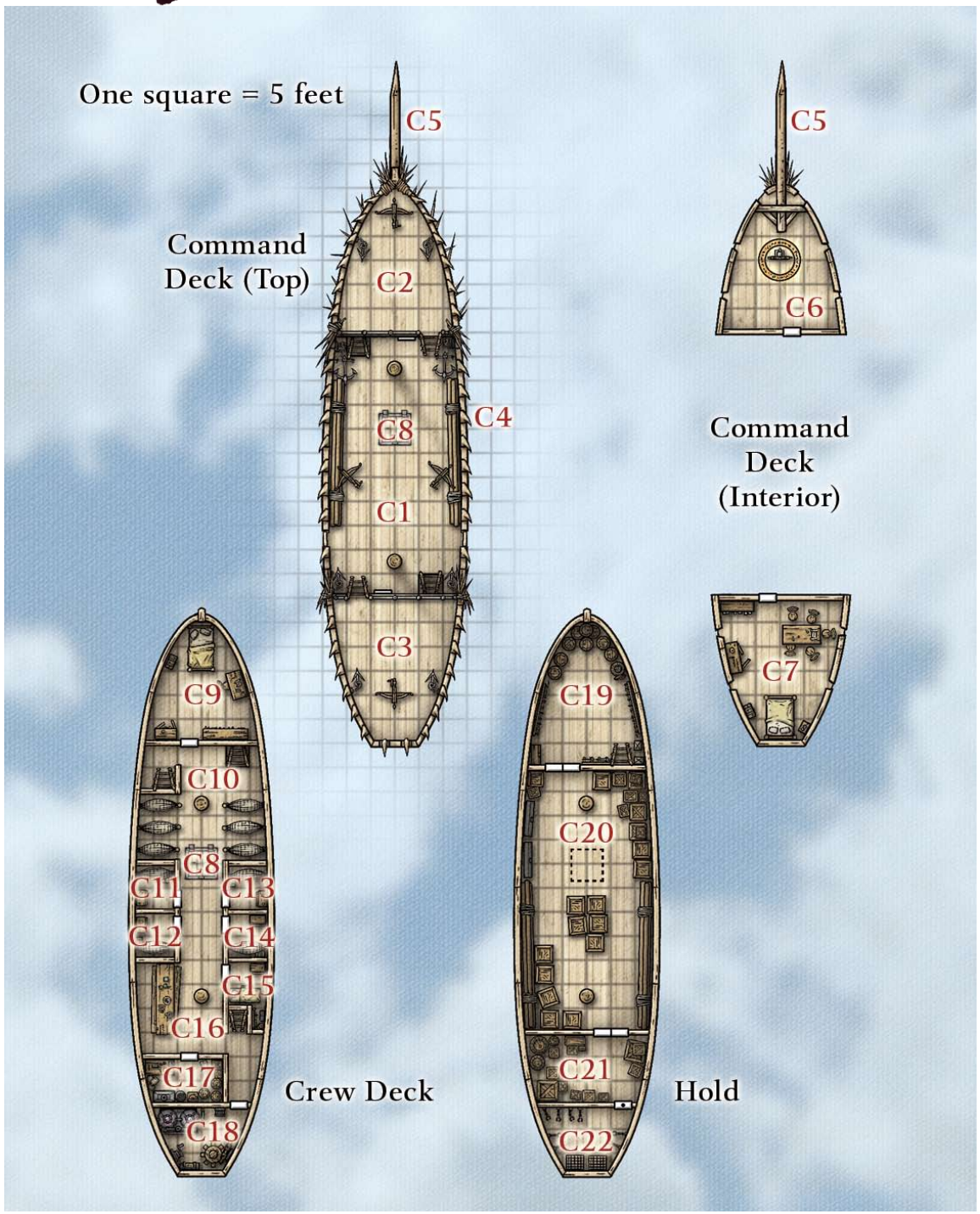
Unlike most traditional ships, the sides of the githyanki war galleon have crenellations to help protect troops. Anyone on the deck has cover from enemies outside the ship who are not attacking from above.

C5. Ramming Spike

Thirty feet long, this sharpened ramming spike is designed to penetrate enemy ships or huge foes. It is wielded by the ship's pilot in the bridge (area C6).

Ballista

Light Ballista Siege Weapon
Load: Standard action
Aim: Minor action
AC 23; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23
Fire (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 20/40; attack bonus as noted below; 4d6 damage.
Siege Weapon Rules
No Powers: You cannot use a weapon power with a siege weapon.
Actions: Loading and firing require multiple actions, which can be split up between different characters. Each character must be adjacent to the weapon. Actions required to load, aim, and fire are indicated above.
Aim: Choose a square as the target. Skip the aim action if you wish to continue firing at the same square as in the previous round. You can load, then aim; or aim, then load.
Attack Bonus: Use the following calculation.
✦ One half the level of the lowest-level crew member.
✦ The Intelligence modifier of the crew member who spent an action to aim.
✦ The siege weapon's proficiency bonus, if any crew member is proficient (+2 for a light ballista).
✦ The crew member firing the ballista applies a bonus from any condition that applies to weapon attacks.
✦ Both crew members apply penalties from any condition that applies to weapon attacks. For example, if either crew member is weakened, a ballista attack deals half damage.
Damage: Roll the indicated damage dice. A ballista adds no ability modifier to its damage rolls.



C6. Bridge

The entire ship is steered and controlled from this location. The room is relatively bare, boasting a runic circle on the floor and a ship's wheel standing before it. Windows around this room allow the captain to see forward and arrowslits allow spellcasters to target attackers to port or starboard outside the ship with superior cover.

The dead githyanki captain's body lies in a heap on the side of this room. The rear of the bridge features a heavy tapestry giving glory to a tall githyanki knight standing triumphantly before a throne. This is an image of Emperor Zetch'r'r, the ruler of the githyanki.

The pilot of ship can attempt to make attacks against another ship with the ramming spike. Doing so requires a successful Intelligence attack against an AC of 20. The attack deals 4d10 + 20 points of damage.

C7. Captain's Cabin

This room is where the now-deceased githyanki captain Dav'ot slept. The desk drawer is locked, requiring a DC 23 Thievery check to open.

The desk contains the captain's orders. These are signed by Captain Iquel, and order the captain of the *Conqueror* to accompany the warships *Sacrifice* and *Tyranny* from Tu'narath to attack the githzerai stronghold of Akma'ad. The ship's manifest lists a full contingent of 140 troops, one dragon and lancer, and a gish assassin named Brann'ot. An additional hand-written note (see page 45) can provide additional information.

C8. Hold Entrance

Removable planks, leading down to hold.

Dav'ot,

We expect the attack to go smoothly and quickly. Our informer is inside Akma'ad already, and has agreed to assist Brann'ot in the assassination of the foul githzerai leaders. Once you receive the signal from my flagship that the defenses are neutralized, land the Conqueror at a safe distance from the fortress and disembark all of your troops along with the Tyranny.

By the grace of High Emperor Zetch'r'r, Lord of the Astral Sea,
Captain Iquel
The Sacrifice

C9. First Officer's Cabin

With no first officer on board, this cabin was inhabited by the gish assassin Brann'ot. The only items of interest are small hand-drawn portraits of three githzerai: Odos, Kath'ik, and Wellik, githzerai leaders currently meeting at Akma'ad. If shown to Tokk'it, he looks exceptionally troubled. Not only does he recognize the leaders, but he recognizes the artistic style as that of Gallia, the githzerai monk he is in love with, and he will say as much.

C10. Crew Quarters

This central area has room for two dozen hammocks. Crew and common soldiers sleep here.

C11–14. Elite Crew Cabins

These cabins are used by any crew members who are too important to bunk in public areas. This might include the ship's first officer, mindslicers, gish, or lancers.

C15. Lancer Cabin

This cabin belongs to a githyanki lancer, the elite warrior who rides a dragon into battle. It smells a bit like dragon, and gear to repair a riding harness and saddle is piled underneath two hammocks.

C16. Crew Quarters

A dozen hammocks are stored against the walls, ready to be hung when needed. This open area is used as a central gathering area when the crew is awake.

C17. Galley

This area is used to prepare food for the ship's crew and passengers.

C18. Psychic Helm

This room is dominated by a complex device made of steel, crystal, and leather. This githyanki psychic helm keeps the ship aloft and maintains its crew of psychic memories. The helm seems to emit a faint screaming sound when in operation. Destroying this helm allows the ship to operate for 5 more hours before the magic it generates fails. The ship shudders violently when it begins to lose power, hopefully giving the captain enough time to land. Destroying the soul helm is possible, and the repercussions of doing so are described on page 43 in the description of the *Conqueror*.

C19–21. Storage

This area is largely empty, as the *Conqueror* held only troops on its way to Akma'ad. The githyanki expected that this area would be filled with pillaged goods on their way back to Tu'narath. The area also holds ammunition for the ship's ballistae and extra food and drink for the githyanki troops.

C22. Brig

Five pairs of empty manacles dangle here.

Repossession Team

Less than an hour after the PCs have departed with Tokk'it on the galleon (unless they delayed substantially at Overlook), the dragon riders sent by the githyanki catch up to the ship.

If either githyanki lancer is captured and questioned after the battle, he gloats that the battle was proceeding as planned when they left, and that the githzerai have no chance of surviving. They also threaten that Captain Iquel will deal quite harshly with Tokk'it for stealing their ship.

Tactical Encounter: D1. Repossession Team (page 74).

The Siege of Akma'ad

Akma'ad is a little-used githzerai fortress and monastery located 140 miles to the southwest of Overlook. Despite having room for over four hundred people, normally only forty to fifty githzerai monks and pilgrims dwell there to train and purify themselves. Over the last week, the site played host to a gathering of important githzerai leaders from across the planes. Intending to travel to the city of Sayre for a council on the conflicts besieging the area (specifically, Overlook's

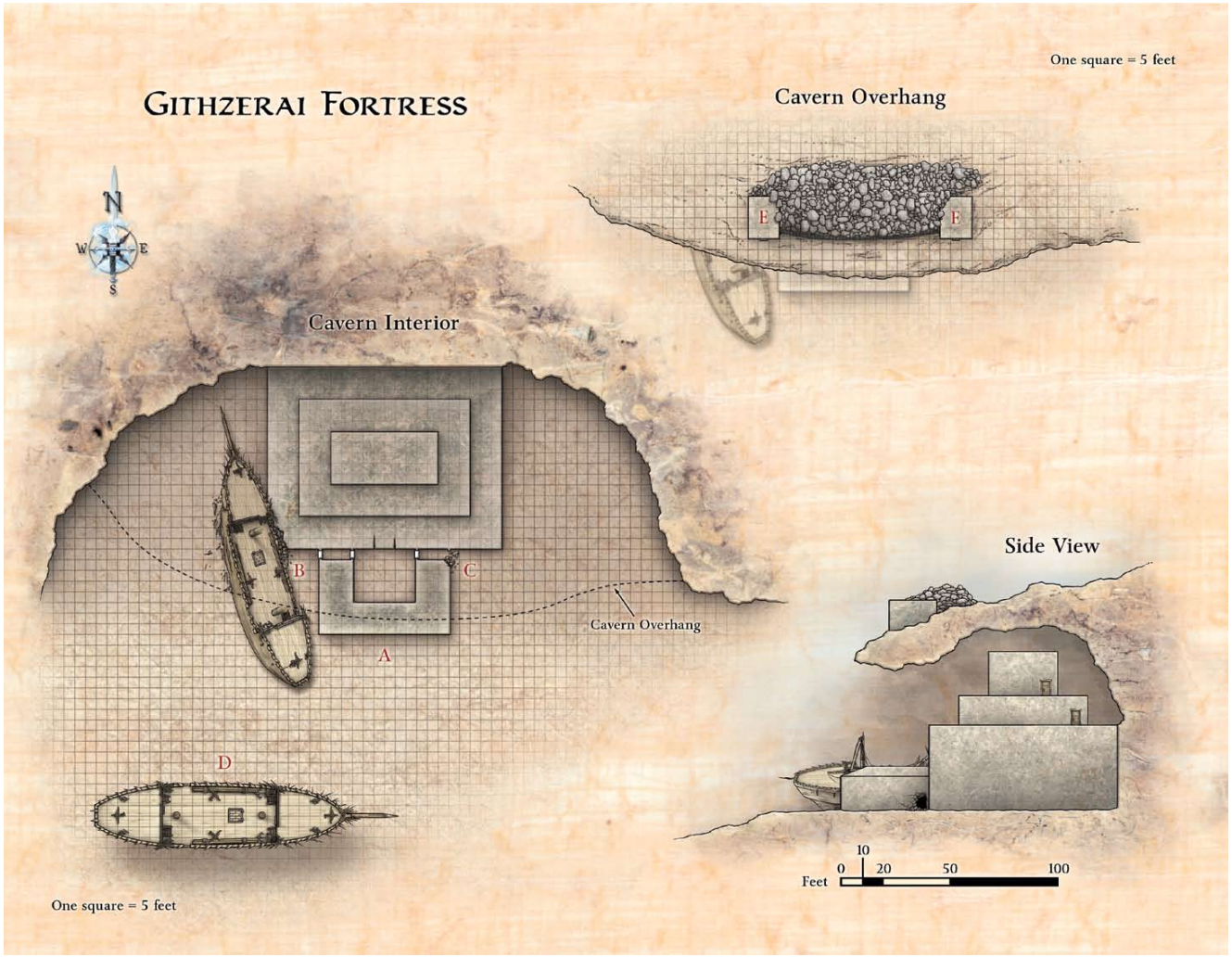
recent woes have not escaped notice outside Elsir Vale), the leaders are deciding the role of githzerai in the upcoming conflict. They know that the githyanki are on the warpath, and the githzerai's monastic leaders disagree as to the best path to take. Acting in accordance with tradition, the githzerai leaders have come to the heart of the burgeoning war to discuss the extent to which they will become involved.

Akma'ad was their choice for a neutral and secure meeting place, but a githzerai named Gallia was possessed by githyanki months ago. She revealed the location to her githyanki contacts as soon as she learned that an important meeting was occurring. The githyanki surreptitiously approached the fortress, scouted the area without being detected, assassinated several of the githzerai leaders, and launched a full-scale attack with enough force to overpower the githzerai. The githzerai have spent the time since the attack desperately defending their fortress. If the PCs do not help, the fortress will inevitably fall.

When the PCs Arrive

The adventurers pass over fields and woods that gradually give way to a reddish rocky waste as they approach the githzerai fortress. They see signs of the battle before they see Akma'ad itself; fire and smoke rise from the site in a dark pillar. The fortress is utilitarian and stark, with red walls rising up over a dusty valley. An overhanging mountain cave makes it extremely defensible.

When the *Conqueror* closes on Akma'ad, the githzerai are close to losing. The upper cliff face has been seized by githyanki, and the githzerai's defensive landslide has not been triggered. A gish assassin managed to infiltrate the fortress and assassinate several key leaders before fleeing. A githyanki champion circles on his red dragon and assaults any fortress defenders



who reveal themselves. Githyanki troops have broken through the githzerai's defenses several times and entered the fortress, only to be rebuffed by the githzerai. Currently the githyanki are still outside the fortress in military formation, launching attacks and working on a final assault, and the githzerai have organized into three units to hold the fortress as long as possible.

The news is not entirely bad, however. The githyanki ship *Tyranny* lies crashed and burning outside of the fortress, brought down by concentrated githzerai attacks. Dead litter the battlefield—far more githyanki than githzerai—but the githzerai are still outnumbered almost five to one.

The Flow of Battle

You will want to be familiar with the different encounters and run them in whatever order makes the most sense. Most encounters allow for the possibility of a short rest between foes. Only the highly mobile dragon can engage the PCs quickly no matter where they are on the battlefield, making it tactically sensible to fight it first. It's up to you to briefly describe what's going on elsewhere on the battlefield. You'll want the PCs to feel like they're part of a huge battle; make the siege as cinematic as possible.

The PCs can proceed across the Akma'ad battlefield in a number of ways. Achieving success at all four of the following encounters means the siege is broken and the githzerai survivors saved. The following order of encounters is most likely.

Draconic Champion

The *Conqueror* is seen approaching the battlefield. The remaining red dragon, ridden by the githyanki champion, approaches to see who crews the ship. The dragon and rider attack, and the remaining ship *Sacrifice* slowly tacks to join the fight after gathering some githyanki troops from the fight below.

Tactical Encounter: A1. Draconic Champion (page 76).

Boarding the Sacrifice

The ship *Sacrifice*—almost as damaged as the *Conqueror* at this point—closes to commandeer the *Conqueror*. The githyanki commander and her bodyguard, as well as the additional troops who just reboarded, engage the PCs. It is possible that the PCs or Tokk'it will try to impale the *Sacrifice* on the *Conqueror's* ramming spike. If successful, both ships lose altitude as they begin to crash.

Tactical Encounter: A2. Boarding the Sacrifice (page 78).

Falling Rock

The PCs kill the guards stationed at the landslide zone above the cliff and drop several hundred tons of rock onto the githyanki troops assaulting the fortress.

Tactical Encounter: A3. Falling Rock (page 80).

Side Entrance and Wall Breach

The PCs finish off stragglers with the aid of counter-attacking githzerai. They slay the githyanki who have just begun a ritual to gain entrance into the fortress, as well as stop a wall breach (tactical encounters A4 and A5).

Tactical Encounter: A4. Side Entrance (page 82).
Tactical Encounter: A5. Wall Breach (page 84).

Another possibility involves the PCs landing their ship before being seen and dropping the landslide while avoiding detection. This is difficult but possible if they keep their ship low to the ground on their approach. This tactic requires coordination with the pilot (likely Tokk'it), who if not otherwise instructed, takes the shortest and most obvious route to the battle. If the PCs pull off this attack, they will be attacked by the red dragon before they can regain the air.

The Aftermath

Once the battle is effectively over, summarize the results based on the adventurers' victory point total (see the "Who Wins?" sidebar). Allies or enemies flee, wounded are tended to, injured enemies are dispatched or captured, and loot is gathered. The surviving githzerai gather in front of the fortress to measure the cost.

Read the following aloud:

The surviving githzerai, many of them wounded, gather around an old blind githzerai who seems as aware of his surroundings as if he could still see. The monk speaks in a rough tone. "We're alive. I don't know how they knew we were here, but the cost was high. Too high. Both Kath'ik and Wellik are dead, along with dozens of our brothers and sisters. We lost the abbot and most of the monastery. Our conference is finished. Now I must decide our path."

With an almost undetectable grimace, the stoic githzerai turns his empty eye sockets toward the lines of dead and wounded. "Gather your belongings. In the morning we travel to Sayre. There is a conference there I am obligated to attend before we depart for home." He pauses and turns his sightless gaze in your direction. "You aren't githzerai, but you fought for us. Who are you?"

The PCs can introduce themselves and explain their role in the battle. Most githzerai hail them as heroes, and Odos (the blind githerzai) grudgingly thanks them, but he is exhausted and grieving for his slain friends. He is not amenable to being told that the githzerai must ally with humans. If Tokk'it mentions that he committed githzerai troops to serve in Overlook as an exchange for getting help, Odos will not be pleased and will tell him to take it up with the githzerai in Sayre.

Odos is not an inspiring leader; he is dour, pessimistic, and suspicious. Nevertheless, he isn't a bad person. He is greatly respected by his people for keeping them both safe and strong in the Elemental Chaos, and his knowledge of history and tradition is legendary. While many of the githzerai might individually disagree with him at times, they would all die to protect him.

Roleplaying Encounter: Negotiating with Odos (page 85).

Who Wins?

In a fight of this magnitude, with hundreds of troops fighting each other in addition to the PCs, it is handy to have a shortcut measure for determining success or failure in the overall battle. You can do so using a victory point system. For each of the following goals that the PCs achieve, total the victory points and consult the table.

Goal	Victory Points Awarded
Landslide released on githyanki army	5
Githyanki commander on *Sacrifice* killed	3
Sacrifice destroyed or captured	2
Githyanki champion on red dragon defeated	2
Troops assaulting fortress scattered	2
Passwall ritual disrupted	1
Githyanki troops entering the east door slain	1

0-5: Almost all the githzerai are captured or killed by githyanki. A handful escape in the confusion, including the spy Gallia. Odos of the House of Reprisal survives as well.

6-10: The githyanki are rebuffed before seizing the fortress. Roughly twenty githzerai survive, including Gallia and Odos of the House of Reprisal.

11+: The githyanki are defeated and scattered. Almost fifty githzerai survive, including Gallia and Odos of the House of Reprisal.

Odos, Githzerai Elder **Level 16 Elite Controller**
Medium natural humanoid (blind) XP 2,800

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +20, blindsight 20
HP 312; **Bloodied** 156
AC 30; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 30; see also *iron mind*
Saving Throws +2
Speed 8
Action Points 1

⊕ **Hammer Strike** (standard; at-will)
+21 vs. AC (crit 19-20); 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

⸸ **Hammering Flurry** (standard; at-will)
The githzerai elder makes two *hammer strike* attacks.

⸸ **Knock Out of Sync** (standard; at-will)
+21 vs. AC (crit 19-20); 3d8 + 5 damage, and the target's initiative count is reduced by 5. If the target's initiative count is reduced below 0, it loses its next turn and then reenters the initiative count at 20.

↯ **Jumping Sparks** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Lightning, Teleportation**
Ranged 10; targets three creatures; +19 vs. Fortitude (no attack roll required for allies); enemies take 2d8 + 7 lightning damage, and the target teleports 7 squares, to an unoccupied space of the elder's choosing.

✧ **Psychic Blows** (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ✦ **Psychic**
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +20 vs. Will; 2d8 + 5 psychic damage.

Avenging Storm (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a ranged or area attack; encounter) ✦ **Teleportation**
A ranged attack targets another creature within 10 squares of the elder. The elder teleports 10 squares into a square adjacent to the attacker and makes two *hammer fist* attacks.

Iron Mind (immediate interrupt, when the githzerai elder would be hit by an attack; encounter)
The githzerai elder gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of his next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Acrobatics +20, Athletics +18, Insight +20
Str 16 (+11) **Dex** 21 (+13) **Wis** 24 (+15)
Con 20 (+13) **Int** 15 (+10) **Cha** 15 (+10)

After the battle, Tokk'it seeks out the female monk Gallia to introduce her to the PCs. In the process of seeking her out, Tokk'it speaks with other githzerai, many of whom remark how they thought she was dead when she was trapped on the upper roof and surrounded. When Tokk'it finds her, she coldly shrugs off any explanation (or questions) about how she was able to survive long enough to re-enter the fortress.

Gallia is polite but formal to both the PCs and Tokk'it. She denies any wrongdoing if accused of spying, although as with other possessed individuals the characters have encountered, a DC 21 Insight check reveals that she's under the influence of an outside source. Based on their experiences in "The Temple Between," they're likely to assume, rightly, that a githyanki spirit is controlling the githzerai woman.

Convincing any githzerai that Gallia is a githyanki spy is not as difficult as the PCs might expect, even to Tokk'it. Her behavior has been odd in the past months since her possession, and the githzerai are familiar with the githyanki's penchant for possessing individuals to use them as spies. Even so, as outsiders, it requires a DC 23 Diplomacy check to convince Odos and the other githzerai that Gallia should be questioned about her activities leading up to and during the attack. If they discovered the portraits on the *Conqueror,* they even have hard evidence that Gallia was sending the githyanki information, and receive a +5 bonus on the Diplomacy check. Should she be seized and searched, she has a small piece of pale green stained glass on her person that she cannot or will not explain. The glass is magical, and a DC 23 Arcana check reveals that it is a one-way communication device; when activated with a ritual only the githyanki in command of Gallia's body knows, it allows her to send a message to an unknown recipient (Telicanthus in Sayre, although Gallia refuses to divulge who her contact is). The glass does not allow her to receive messages.

Gallia cannot be intimidated. As with possessed individuals that the PCs have encountered in past Scales of War adventures (see "The Temple Between" in issue #161), the spirit in Gallia's body can't really be threatened, since it can leave at any time. If Gallia is killed, the possessing githyanki spirit simply wakes up in its rightful body, leaving behind only a lifeless githzerai shell. The spirit in Gallia refuses to answer questions. In terms of the adventure, she's here to confirm that the githyanki spies are everywhere, and that they plotted this attack for some time right under the noses of their hated githzerai enemies.

If the glass is discovered and she has the opportunity after being accused, Gallia attempts to flee and rejoin the gish assassin Brann'ot. If the PCs are able to prove her complicity as a spy, Odos orders her executed on the spot. She will laugh and not resist. She refuses to answer questions. The heroes can attempt to intercede on her behalf with a DC 25 Diplomacy or Bluff check (bluffing Odos entails convincing him that they have a way to drive the spirit out) . Success means Odos orders Gallia bound in chains and put under a 24-hour guard.

Gallia	Level 11 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, githzerai	XP 600
Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +13	
HP 108; **Bloodied** 54	
AC 27; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 23; see also *iron mind*	
Speed 7; see also *inescapable fate*	
⊕ **Unarmed Strike** (standard; at-will)	
+17 vs. AC; 2d8 + 3 damage.	
⸸ **Stunning Strike** (standard; at-will)	
+14 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target is stunned until the end of Gallia's next turn.	
Inescapable Fate (immediate reaction, when an adjacent enemy shifts away from Gallia; at-will)	
Gallia shifts to remain adjacent to the enemy. Gallia cannot use this power if the enemy shifts using a movement mode Gallia does not possess.	
Iron Mind (immediate interrupt, when Gallia would be hit by an attack; encounter)	
Gallia gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of her next turn.	
Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)	
Gallia can fly 5 squares.	
Trace Chance (standard; recharge ⚅)	
Ranged 5; no attack roll required; the next melee attack Gallia makes against the target gains a +5 power bonus to the attack roll and, if it hits, it is automatically a critical hit.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Acrobatics +15, Athletics +9, Insight +13	
Str 15 (+7) **Dex** 17 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+8)	
Con 12 (+6) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 11 (+5)	

The githzerai leader Odos is the only surviving member of a group of githzerai leaders meeting at Akma'ad. As described above, he's taciturn and especially distrustful of outsiders as a rule, and these traits are only exacerbated by recent experiences. He lost several close friends and pupils in the githyanki attack on the monastery, and he's not interested in any negotiations with Overlook at the moment. He flatly refuses to send any githzerai to the city to help shore up its defense, despite any promises Tokk'it might have made. Odos intends to lead his surviving people to Sayre to join with other githzerai refugees there. But despite his resolve on these issues, the characters have the option of learning some important details from Odos. See the "Negotiating with Odos" roleplaying encounter on page 85 for details.

If the PCs do not offer to accompany the githzerai to Sayre, Odos simply rounds up his survivors and prepares to begin the long trek alone. At that point, Tokk'it quietly approaches and asks the heroes to come along, concerned that Odos is not necessarily making the wisest decisions in his grieving state. Tokk'it mentions that this might give Odos a chance to know "humans," and the road will be dangerous. In addition, the PCs may wish to learn more about a supposed war council that the githzerai had met to discuss joining in the first place. Of course, if the characters have engaged Odos, they might have already learned all about the trip to Sayre and the war council (see "Negotiating with Odos" on page 85). Underneath it all, though, Tokk'it enjoys their company. He feels more like a hero when he is with the adventurers, and he would enjoy spending more time hearing their stories.

Sayre is over twenty miles away across rough terrain, and the githzerai have wounded who must be pulled along in small carts. Due to the slow pace, it takes two days for the githzerai to reach Sayre with their patients. Under the ministrations of the PCs and any githzerai healers, the injured troops begin to heal.

Ambush

Although the githyanki attack was thwarted, Brann'ot the gish assassin survived by fleeing early. He single-handedly killed two of the elder githzerai, and he hopes to finish the job while the large group is traveling. He attacks on the night of the first camp.

Tactical Encounter: S1: Ambush (page 86).

If the PCs somehow manage to save a githyanki war galleon and use that to travel to Sayre, Brann'ot stows away on board and attacks at the earliest opportunity. He destroys the runic circle that allows the ship to be controlled and then starts hunting Odos and the PCs. His *astral slide* ability makes it easy for him to move around the ship quickly. Move the "Ambush" tactical encounter to the map of the war galleon rather than the tactical map indicated on the encounter page.

Allies at Akma'ad

If you want, you can certainly decide that a number of soldiers from Overlook accompany the PCs on the galleon, or introduce a rival adventuring party to act as the heroes' foil. These other combatants can engage different githyanki than the PCs during the battle at the githzerai fortress, allowing you to emphasize the sheer number of foes without having to play out every individual battle.

The City of Sayre

Sayre is an artistic, monument-filled city built in a particularly beautiful valley. Sayre holds a university and a large number of artisans, making it a popular site for those who deal in either information or fine art.

Population: Approximately 12,000, including almost 1,500 students attending the University. Most inhabitants are human, elf, eladrin, or halfling. Some

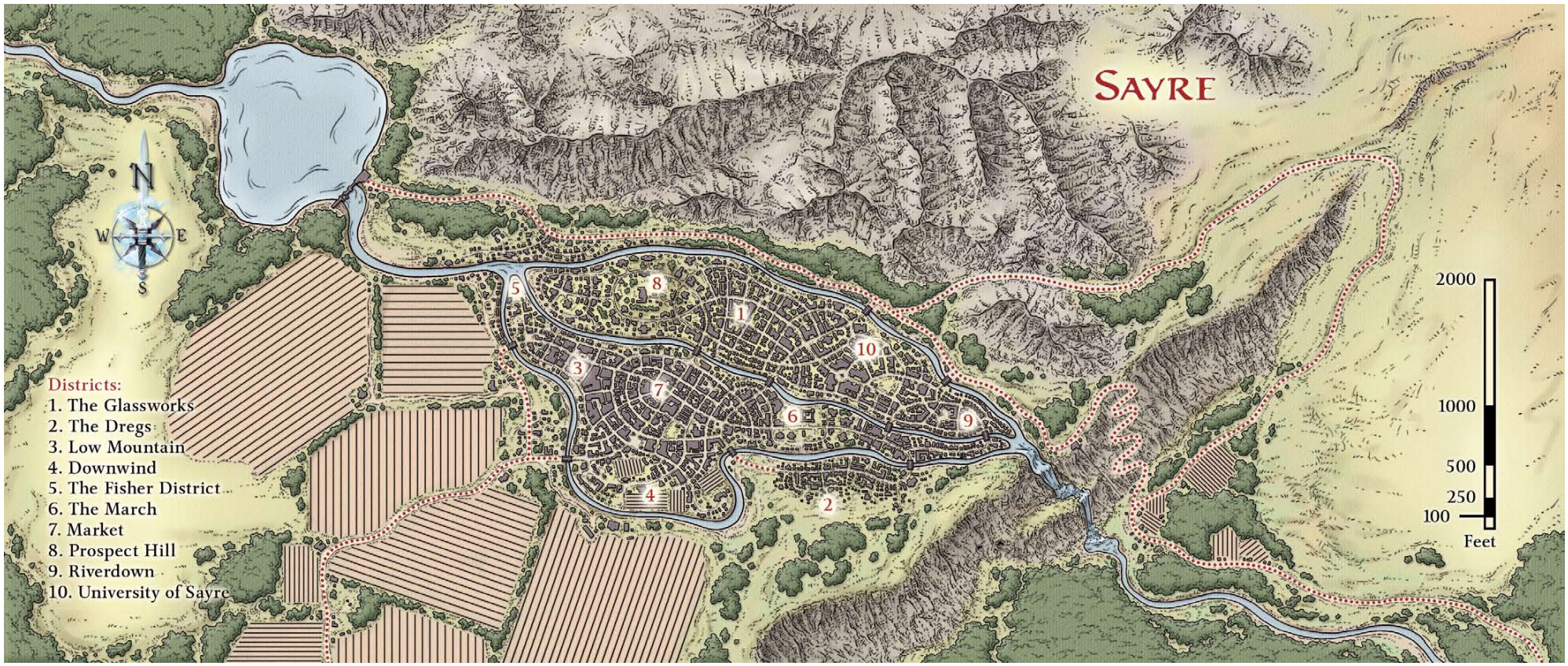
dwarves also live in Sayre, although they tend to keep to themselves.

Government: Sayre is governed by Lord Divian Torrance, a politically astute nobleman adept at playing different factions of the city against each other. Power resides with Lord Torrance, as well as the Artisan's Guild and the University's archdean.

Defense: The Guards of the March are a force of 100 soldiers led by General Alvro Taramin that have little to do other than patrol the safer sections in and around the city. Most merchants, guilds, and noble families have their own mercenary guards that protect their property and work together when danger appears. In a time of crisis, General Taramin has the authority to call on any house with its own private guard to cede command of their troops directly to him. Fortunately, he has never had to do so, but if he were, he could call over 2,000 troops. With a cliff, a lake, and steep hills protecting three sides of Sayre, the Guards of the March spend much of their time outside the city patrolling the farming areas to the west.

Inns and Taverns: Caperly's Dancehall; Firetree Alehouse; the Rat and Hammer Inn; the Singing River Inn; the Sodden Mage tavern; The Tankard of Ink tavern. The River Jewel in The Glassworks is the most expensive inn in the city, and the Inn of the Ugly Dog in the Dregs is the cheapest.

Supplies: The Market; the Glassworks; Low Mountain. The Market District is the home of hundreds of different vendors of almost any product conceivable, although not all are legitimate. The Glassworks is home to the city's finest artists and artisans, and is the place to go if you're looking for jewelers or sculptors. Low Mountain is home to most of Sayre's dwarves, and hidden weaponsmiths and armorers are available to anyone who can gain a prior recommendation from a dwarf.



Temples: Bright Forge (Moradin); Covet House (Tiamat, hidden); the Founding Tower (Erathis); Great Hall (Ioun); Shrine of the Singing Waters (Corellon); the Waypoint (Avandra).

History

Sayre is built in a small, defensible valley. Steep hills to the north provide protection from overland armies and make excellent spots for small defensive guard posts. The Lake of Songs sits uphill to the northwest of the city. Dammed at its outflow to help control floods, this lake is used year-round for fishing and recreation; it is extraordinarily beautiful and the subject of many paintings and tapestries by local artists. The Singing River descends from the lake and splits briefly into three branches as it flows through Sayre. A tall cliff guards Sayre's eastern flank, dropping 200 feet to the valley below. The only direction an invading army could easily approach Sayre from is the west, across the farms and fields, and guard towers alert the town to any threat approaching from that direction.

Before Sayre was built, the city of Auger stood on this site, built over 400 years ago as a refuge for exiled diviners. A diviner named Auglos and his apprentices were driven from the island of Nefelus after he prophesized a local noble's death and was blamed by the man's relatives. After fleeing the family's wrath, Auglos settled in this particularly beautiful and defensible valley to continue his research into divination and communication. More academics and sages slowly joined him, and a small city—Auger—grew up around his tower.

Auglos's skill as a craftsman began to bring him fame. At first he specialized in divinatory devices such as crystal balls. His masterpiece was a huge glass globe the color of the evening sky, a device that could transmit messages thousands of miles and even across planes if individually crafted receiving mirrors were first attuned to it. Auglos sold the communication mirrors for extremely high prices, typically to merchant consortiums or the rulers of more prosperous city states. His customers never knew that if he chose, he could hear and see everything that passed through one of his glass devices, and that he also sold much of the information he obtained through his eavesdropping, resulting in an even more profitable secondary business in the espionage trade.

Auglos knew that his glass globe created psychic ripples in the Astral Sea when it was used, but he didn't consider it a problem; how likely was it that anyone would be bothered? He should have done more research. His master glass, the device attuned to all the others that allowed him to listen in on so many fascinating conversations, created ripples near the githyanki city of Tu'narath, and psychic debris from the glass's communication soon caught the githyanki's attention. The githyanki quickly determined that someone on the mortal realm was using the energy of the plane to fuel a communication device. Paranoid in the extreme, within three months, the Lich Queen Vlaakith herself named this device the Bitter Glass and decreed that the psychic pollution must be eliminated. Her knights quickly carried out her orders.

The raid on Auger was terrible to behold. Githyanki dragonriders shattered the town's dam, flooding the streets with water and mud, then proceeded to pick off fleeing citizens one by one. By the end of the night, Auglos and his assistants were dead, and the Bitter Glass was shattered and buried under the broken tower that housed it. Auger's remains were looted and abandoned, and survivors from the raid left the area, never aware of the reason behind the attack.

Rebuilding

Shepherds moved back onto the site within sixty years, but without a dam on the Singing River, the site of the former city had become a flood plain whenever it rained. Finally, dwarven engineers rebuilt the dam on the Lake of Songs, and Sayre was built where Auger once stood. The level of the land had risen after so many years of floods, and none of the old buildings were still visible above ground. All residents of the modern city know that there is an old city beneath the streets, and some families dug down to take advantage of a pre-made cellar by digging through the roofs of old buildings, but enough people caused cave-ins or unleashed monsters that it's now illegal to dig into the undercity.

Sayre is ruled by a wily half-elven politician named Lord Divian Torrance, and under his direction the city goes out of its way to attract the finest artists and craftsmen in the land. As a result, many wealthy families call Sayre home, and all of these have their own mercenary security forces to protect their houses and workshops. Not much of a public militia is needed, although a small force controlled by Torrance's good friend General Taramin remains active. The public militia is subsidized by a public ordinance crafted by the wily Lord Torrance. Each family above a certain income level must commit a number of troops from their own personal guard units to the city's defense. This makes the city's safety the concern of all the wealthiest families, although it requires a charismatic and skillful general to keep all the different house troops in line. Sayre boasts a small theater and a large university that attracts scholars from cities across this corner of the mortal realm. For such a small city, Sayre is a shining beacon of light. Lord Torrance fully intends to keep it that way.

The Fisher District

Located at the northern tip of the city, this low-lying area is prone to floods during the spring rains. Fishermen and fishmongers who live here ply the lake for their trade and live in raised huts. It's possible to buy fish in the market district, but the freshest fish can be bought by those brave enough to come north up muddy streets and buy the catch coming off the boats. There isn't much crime in the Fisher District; most fishermen have large families, and they police their own neighborhood with stout clubs and many friends. Interestingly, this is the one neighborhood that isn't defined by the breaks of the river. Fishermen live on both outer shores and both inner ones, crossing the rivers in small boats or over swaying rope bridges.

Ketch's Catch: This small fish stand has a reputation for bringing in some of the largest, tastiest fish in the lake. More importantly, the stall is run by Gloriana Ketch. She makes a business of tracking city gossip while her husband is off fishing, and she's a good source for anyone who wants to know the latest city rumors about the nobles or anyone of importance. If you feel the need to drop any rumors about events in or around town—or further afield—Gloriana is a good source for PCs to seek out.

Prospect Hill

This residential neighborhood holds the majority of the city's grand estates and mansions. Flanked by rivers on either side, the low hill rises gradually over the rest of Sayre. This neighborhood was the heart of the ancient City of Seers. All the richest citizens of Sayre live here. There is virtually no crime here, and private mercenary units ensure that the neighborhood stays safe. Unsavory types moving through Prospect Hill should expect to be challenged several times, especially after dark.

The Pillar of Hope Reborn: This ostentatious memorial is a 60-foot-tall pillar with an eternal, magical flame atop it. According to the plaque this marks the spot of "Auglos the Wise's tower in Auger, first founder of the city that became Sayre." It's not particularly accurate, being located almost 200 feet from Telicanthus's mansion and the actual site of the tower, but it's a good meeting spot for young couples on Prospect Hill who wish to go courting after dark. The beggars of Sayre have a yearly competition, awarding 50 gp to anyone of their ilk who can surreptitiously climb the pillar and extinguish the flame. Guardsmen usually find crippled and dead beggars under the pillar for weeks afterward.

Telicanthus's Mansion: Marked by gate pillars boasting lanterns made from exquisitely blown glass, this mansion was bought by Telicanthus and renovated after the former owner moved south. It's one of the social epicenters of Prospect Hill, and servants and guests enter and exit it during most daylight hours (or later, if Telicanthus is hosting a party.) A competent and wily butler (Telicanthus's sociopathic servant Pennel) monitors all guests and stops anyone who doesn't belong. Telicanthus's guards are notably polite as they escort interlopers off the property. A successful DC 23 Streetwise check by a character also reveals that unlike other parts of the city, none of General Taramin's city militia come within three blocks of Telicanthus's home. See SC3: Telicanthus's Tea Party for more details on this bit of information.

The Glassworks

This neighborhood on the eastern edge of Prospect Hill is home to the city's artists. Sayre attracts many of the finest craftsmen to this area. The wide roads are lined with shops and stores, and are roughly grouped by type of business. Businesses selling expensive goods, such as goldmakers and jewelers, typically have their own security. There's an atmosphere of camaraderie in the Glassworks, and in the event of trouble, all locals pitch in to solve the problem. Many artists and shop owners live in apartments located over their stores.

The River Jewel: This is one of the finest inns in the entire city, with superb service and prices to match. Rooms are large, secure, beautifully decorated, and extremely comfortable. The staff offers any amenity a guest might want, and will send out for food or items not offered in-house, and the chefs are renowned for truly delicious meals. Rooms here cost 15 gp a night, an outrageous amount compared to other inns in the city, but rooms seldom go empty. Telicanthus offers to house the PCs here, in individual rooms if they prefer, at his own cost. If he does, the staff will be informed that their guests are the Heroes of Elsir Vale, and will treat the PCs with inordinate respect.

The Rose Window: This shop carries only the finest stained glass and sculpted crystal. Bando Hammerglass is as knowledgeable a dwarven craftsman as you can find, and can usually identify a stained glass window's craftsman if the individual is famous enough. He charges high prices for high quality art, but is happy to talk to PCs if they come by with questions. Bando is puzzled if the PCs bring panes of the Bitter Glass to him for identification, as he'll be fairly sure that the work is Telicanthus's. It's not, but it's of a similar style thanks to Kle'th's repairs of the original. He won't tell the PCs that immediately, however, and will put them off for an afternoon while he consults with Telicanthus himself. Only a DC 23 Diplomacy check encourages Bando to open up with this information on an initial meeting. If Bando does speak with Telicanthus, the githyanki sends Pennel that night to murder

Bando in his bed and dispose of his body to prevent him from speaking with the adventurers.

Bando cannot positively identify the glass pieces that might have been found at Akma'ad, or the cast-off glass shards that the beggars are using as knives in encounter V1: the Plaza of Vision, but he can confirm that they came from the same extremely qualified glassmaker.

The University of Sayre

Founded by a priestess of Ioun who was appalled with the lack of learning among most people she met, the university is a bustling school of higher learning that teaches everything from agriculture to esoteric magical theory. Students tend to be young and from out of town, as the university recruits the best and brightest from many different areas. The university is often viewed as an excellent finishing school for noble sons and daughters, and it isn't uncommon for loyal servants to be seen dragging their drunken masters back home after a rowdy night in the Dregs.

The Tankard of Ink: This is a popular tavern for students who want to be in stumbling distance of their rooms after drinking, and for those who don't care for the Dregs. Many professors from the university have adopted the tankard as their own, as well. This is the place to come if you want a philosophical debate instead of a fistfight.

Low Mountain

While most races have integrated nicely in Sayre, the dwarven inhabitants tend to keep to themselves. Low Mountain is a neighborhood of high stone walls and twisting streets. Non-dwarves have trouble finding places in Low Mountain, as none of the streets are labeled, and none of the buildings are numbered or named. As they say, "If you need to know where you are in Low Mountain, you probably shouldn't be there." The area is safe, with squads formed exclusively of dwarven guards patrolling the streets after nightfall, but it's not particularly exciting to non-dwarves. That changes if you're a dwarf, or have the trust of one. Wonderful restaurants, clever sages, and master craftsmen hide within the featureless buildings. Some dwarves will accept a bribe to guide outsiders to the right place and introduce them to the right contact.

Deep Cartography: This small shop contains two dwarven brothers, Andor and Toris Scrollstone, sages who specialize in maps and locations. Commonly consulted by explorers into the Underdark and merchants who have long journeys ahead of them, the Scrollstone brothers are the people to consult if the PCs wish to learn more about Sayre's undercity. Although they know nothing about the Bitter Glass, they can talk about Auger and its destruction at unknown hands. They have old maps showing what buildings used to be where. A DC 21 Dungeoneering check reveals to the PCs that Auglos's tower was originally below the spot where Telicanthus's mansion now stands. Both dwarves actually know this if asked, as the incorrect location of the memorial plaque on Prospect Hill annoys them.

The Market

This is the heart of the city for everyone but the wealthiest citizens. The streets are full of people from all walks of life, and any non-exotic object (as well as many exotic and rare ones) can be purchased here. Whether you're looking for ink from a giant octopus or the feather from an angel, you'll likely to be able to buy it—or something that the seller swears is authentic—somewhere in the market. This area is characterized by narrow streets, tiny shop stalls, yelling shopkeeps, and a multitude of different bazaars. Due to the university, the market contains a great number of booksellers and scrollmakers. Debt-ridden sages who have been forced to sell their library crouch side by side with itinerant thieves peddling stolen spellbooks.

Rancid Agnes: This elderly beggar holds court at the edge of the market. She is taken care of by regulars in the market who consider it good luck to throw her a few coins when they pass by. In return, she is unfailingly friendly to anyone who doesn't treat her with contempt. Agnes is always happy to pass a few minutes chatting with strangers, and she's the best resource for finding something quickly, as she has a good memory for what merchant has what sort of item. Secretly she is also a spy for the church of Tiamat, passing on any worthwhile gossip to the high priest. Agnes is one of the city's original beggars, and despite their work with the temple, she is envious of the new "beggars" Telicanthus brought in to foment discord between the city's residents and githzerai refugees. A DC 21 Diplomacy check accompanied by at least a 10-gp bribe results in Agnes making an offhand, angry reference to the "new beggars" in town and their "work agin' the refugees," but if confronted on these comments, Agnes looks frightened and scampers away.

Downwind

The name for the farmer and tannery district is usually correct, with the stink of the livestock blowing away to the southwest. This district is characterized by wide pens, warehouses and slaughterhouses, and stockyards where herd animals are sold. On the rare occasions when exotic animals or monsters are brought into the city, they're kept in Downwind until sold.

The March

The March looks almost like a military parade ground. This area was once the preferred spot for Lord Limbic the Scholar, a former ruler who had an obsession with statuary and monuments. As a result, he spent a great deal of the city's coffers on self-aggrandizing monuments. More than two dozen great statues, triumphal arches to non-existent battles, and other spectacular monuments stand in this area. They're starting to decay somewhat due to a lack of interest in keeping them pristine, but they define this section of the city.

The Dangle: This was originally named "The Triumphal Arch of Limbic the Gracious" until it was turned into the city's location for public execution and punishment. Murderers are hanged from the 30-foot-tall arch and left to dangle for a few days. Public stocks are also located here, for punishments of a less severe nature. Public executions are rare in Sayre, and the city hasn't seen one in months.

The Guard Barracks: Sayre doesn't require a large standing army thanks to the proliferation of private guards, but the one hundred full-time city militia the city employs are stationed in this gray, austere building that is also known for its statue of Lord Limbic standing on the roof.

The Dregs

Most of the city's entertainment is located in this rundown, old section of the city. Dancehalls, seedy taverns, pawn shops, breweries, and comfort houses all crowd its narrow alleys. The area isn't immediately dangerous to visitors, as thugs paid by local businesses roam the streets with the intent of keeping people safe in the theory that "a live customer is a paying customer." They've been known to look the other way after dark, though, especially for a sizeable bribe.

Inn of the Ugly Dog: This tiny inn sits above a loud and raucous tavern. The namesake dog has been stuffed by a taxidermist and magically animated; it staggers around the tavern to greet visitors. The Inn of the Ugly Dog has cheap ale, mostly clean rooms, good prices, and an ever-changing array of owners as the property is a common stake in the inn's games of chance.

Riverdown

These are the slums of Sayre, and the area where the city's undesirables live. Beggars and unsavory visitors gather here, along with anyone too poor to pay for lodging elsewhere. Abandoned and crumbling warehouses hold rotting goods or illegal and smuggled property. The streets are narrow and twisting, made slick by constant mist that rises from the waterfalls. Dark and smoke-stained buildings house beggars with wet coughs from the constant moisture. Rats scuttling through glassless windows provide one of the few free food sources for the locals. It isn't an attractive place to live, and visitors who show weakness are likely to be preyed upon by the locals.

The Plaza of Vision: This abandoned plaza is surrounded by vacant buildings. The githzerai living in Sayre have taken over one of them, reinforcing it and using it as a temporary headquarters.

Lowbridge: The local temple to Tiamat, worshipped in her role as Goddess of Greed and Envy, is located in an abandoned warehouse across the street from the last bridge in Sayre. Beggars congregate in this area each morning before heading out across the city. The beggars, strangely, won't speak to anyone while near Lowbridge. They won't ask for money until they've gone to other parts of town, as they're careful not to draw attention to the activities of the Filth King (leader of the city's beggars).

Approaching Sayre

You hear the distant sound of church bells long before you actually see Sayre. It lies in the valley below you, nestled between three rivers. Sunlight reflects from the city's canals. Although it has roughly the same number of inhabitants as Overlook, Sayre is a very different city. It is said to be a city of artists, artisans, and scholars, and you can see why. The sunlight filtering through the hills gives a golden glow to the entire valley. From where you stand, you can see mansions and palaces rising up from islands between the rivers, university halls jutting upward, numerous monuments and large statues, and the smoke from smithies rising into the air. Mist from a huge waterfall swirls along the southern edge of the city.

A guardhouse stands in front of the great bridge that leads over the river into the city. A throng of people bustle about—buskers, salesfolk, travelers, beggars, and guards. Even a few rich nobles can be seen, riding in open-top carriages in their finery.

A servant comes up, haltingly. "Excuse me," he says, "but by any chance are you the Heroes of Elsir Vale?"

If the PCs say yes, he smiles widely.

"My master will be so pleased! You're quite famous; he was just talking about you today at tea. Would you do me the honor of allowing me to introduce you?"

If they say no, the servant looks disappointed and says that his master Lord Telicanthus would be sorry not to offer them hospitality. If they say yes, he looks even happier and leads them through the throng to a dark-doored wooden carriage with remarkable stained glass windows. The carriage is pulled by two horses. The servant knocks once and opens the door.

"My Lord Telicanthus, may I please introduce the famous Heroes of Elsir Vale."

A tall, spindly man steps out into the sunlight. Lord Telicanthus is a githyanki.

He's quite unlike any githyanki that the PCs have seen before, however. Lord Telicanthus has a warm, quick smile and eyes that make it clear he's very interested in whomever is speaking. He wears very fashionable, expensive clothing and has no githyanki jewelry or weaponry whatsoever. His handshake is firm, his voice is clear, and he has only the faintest trace of an accent when he addresses the PCs.

"It's such a pleasure to meet you. We've received some news of our friends to the north, but I never expected to meet the heroes in person! Some travelers have brought word of your many battles. It's very rare to meet living heroes, so this is quite a moment for me. Are you just arriving here in Sayre?"

If the answer is yes, then Telicanthus continues.

"Well, allow me to provide you with some most humble shelter! The finest inn in the city is the River Jewel, right by the bridge in our Glassworks District. Pennel?" He turns to his secretary, just exiting the carriage. "Run ahead to the Jewel and book . . ." He looks at you and counts. "Rooms for each of them. Put it on my account there, meals included. Let them know that their guests are people of honor, and are to be treated as such." The secretary nods and hurries off. "It's so rare to get people of the world here, artists aside." He considers. "Would you do me the honor of coming to tea tomorrow? All the elite in the city, from the mayor on down, would doubtlessly be honored to meet you. You'll be the toast of the town. Tomorrow, at my estate—I'll have Pennel leave details for you in the morning, and I'll send a carriage."

If he observes them with the githzerai, his attitude tightens a little. A DC 23 Insight check reveals that he doesn't like githzerai much, but that he's working to be polite. If they accuse him of being a githyanki, he smiles.

"Of course I am! I'm not associated at all with those murderous fellows in the Astral Sea, though. No, I left that life years ago and I've never regretted it once. I'm a glassmaker now, and a loyal citizen of this fine city. We can't help how we're born, but we can choose how we live our lives. Something that everyone really ought to learn."

Telicanthus is lying, but he's told this lie so much that it flies off his lips easily. Have him make a Bluff check with a +5 bonus (+28 total) if the PCs attempt to discern whether or not he's lying. Odos and his fellow githzerai, on the other hand, are openly angry that a githyanki lives in the city. Odos manages to refrain from attacking Telicanthus on sight, only because he doesn't want to risk his people being thrown out of Sayre for attacking one of the city's residents—and a wealthy one, at that. Odos gathers his people and leaves the area immediately without another word, his wrath evident in every curt gesture.

What's Happening

Telicanthus knew the PCs were approaching from one of his agents who saw the PCs and the githzerai while traveling. Telicanthus sees the heroes as a potential enemy, one that would certainly be opposed to his mission if they found him out, but he is too egotistical to see them as an actual, credible threat. He is confident that he'll manage to convince the adventurers that he's harmless, just as he's done to everyone else in the city. He believes that if he shows them kindness, flatters their egos with deference and attention, and buys them expensive gifts, they will underestimate him and become his unwitting allies without even realizing they have done so. He knows of General Zithiruun's defeat, as well as their pursuit of Sarshan, but doesn't believe overcoming any innate dislike of his race will cause him any more of an issue than it has with the residents of Sayre. Telicanthus is so accustomed to racism that it doesn't even cause him to blink anymore.

His invitation to tea is a high honor, as anyone in town can tell the PCs. Telicanthus's invitations are hotly contested, and the local social scene can revolve around who is invited and who is not. People in town know that Telicanthus is a kind and important merchant, and he is immensely popular. They'd be surprised if told that his fellow githyanki are responsible for the attacks on nearby settlements. In fact, most of Sayre's citizens are so well insulated from the outside world that few are aware a war is underway just beyond their walls.

Entering the City

Once the PCs and Telicanthus part ways, the adventurers quickly discover a new problem. Their githzerai allies are being turned away at the gates, helped not at all by their curt and now angry leader Odos. The city guards refuse to allow the githzerai to cross the bridge into the city. They are extremely rude, explaining that "their kind isn't welcome here" since all they do is "steal and cause trouble." If the PCs intervene, a DC 18 Diplomacy check can get the githzerai inside; a githzerai attempting Diplomacy does so with a –5 penalty to the check. A DC 18 Perception check while this negotiation takes place shows Telicanthus watching from his carriage window as it passes by into Sayre. His expression is one of amusement, and a DC 23 Insight check reveals a certain cruel satisfaction in the githzerai's predicament. Feel free to give the PCs a bonus on their check for roleplaying the scene well (for example, if they bring up the unprovoked attack at Akma'ad). Once successful, the guards grudgingly let the githzerai pass.

If the adventurers fail, the githzerai are not allowed in through this gate. They will need to walk south along the Singing River to reach the southern bridge into Riverdown, the worst section of Sayre.

The PCs have the choice of heading directly to the River Jewel, accompanying the githzerai to their lodging in Riverdown, or finding lodging of their own. The party is most likely entering the city from the east if they have come from Akma'ad. Entering the city here will take them through the broad, paved streets of the University. They will walk next to academic buildings and past marble statues of long-dead deans, topping the hill and heading down toward the central fork of the river. Following the river northwest brings them into the Glassworks and right to the door of the River Jewel, the finest inn in Sayre. Telicanthus's secretary Pennel will have arrived here before the PCs, and their rooms will be ready. They are offered baths, food, and the finest amenities, all at Telicanthus's expense.

Following the east fork of the Singing River southward brings them into Riverdown. The quality of the buildings begins to degrade quickly once they are away from the university, and an oily mildew covers the stone walls. Constant mist from the nearby waterfall fills the air here. If it is daytime, the streets boast less wealthy individuals running errands, packs of unsupervised children, stray dogs, and people of questionable repute. There are a large number of beggars living in Riverdown, and anyone with the sort of wealth and stature that the PCs have will be watched carefully. While the characters are watched, a DC 23 Streetwise check reveals that, strangely enough, no beggars approach them once they're in this district, whereas they're approached freely elsewhere in Sayre. While a hastily organized ambush from local gang members is possible if the PCs put themselves in an especially vulnerable situation, the local toughs aren't suicidal, and no one would attack a combination of the PCs and so many githzerai.

The Githzerai Sanctuary

PCs accompanying the githzerai arrive at the Plaza of Vision, an open area in Riverdown only accessible by winding through back alleys that branch off of tertiary streets. It's an isolated and dark plaza surrounded by abandoned and rotting warehouses. A corroding statue of a skyward-staring wizard stands in an empty fountain in the middle of the square. It isn't uncommon to find a beggar or two loitering here. Finding the Plaza of Vision will require some hunting by the PCs, but isn't a particularly difficult challenge. Odos knows that the githzerai living in Sayre live in a red building alongside the plaza, and he leads the group there directly.

Odos is appalled that the githzerai aren't living somewhere better. Riverdown is extremely poor, particularly when compared to the university district they walked through earlier, and Odos feels that this area is beneath the dignity of the githzerai. He is fuming by the time they arrive, particularly when he sees that the building used by the githzerai is an old warehouse painted with flaking, peeling red paint. A githzerai at the door readily admits them, and a DC 15 Perception check reveals raised voices coming from deeper inside the building. The words are unintelligible, but it sounds like githzerai voices raised in anger.

Kark'din, the Low Sanctuary

There are thirty-five githzerai currently inside the makeshift "Low Sanctuary," an open warehouse that has been divided into sleeping, meeting, and eating sections. The structure is rough and dilapidated, but clean and organized. Its well-lit interior is a nice counterpoint to the slums outside.

The current state of the githzerai community in Sayre could best be described as fractious. The githzerai have splintered into two groups who believe they should proceed in very different ways. One of the leaders, Aziff, urges patience and caution. She is convinced that the locals' feelings are temporary. She has lived in Sayre for many years, and the recent change in public opinion about the city's githzerai citizens has distressed her a great deal (although she doesn't reveal anything but a stoic demeanor openly). Aziff has the backing of the other local githzerai, and also of a friend the PCs will recognize (see "An Old Friend" below).

The other leader, an atypically fiery githzerai named Gal'ott, is urging action. Young and angry, he wants to take the fight to the streets, organizing what amounts to a githzerai gang. Gal'ott and several other githzerai are refugees from cities and monasteries from elsewhere in the world. Many have traveled several hundred miles to get to Sayre after seeing githyanki destroy their homes, and they're appalled that nothing is being done here to combat the threat. These githzerai wear red armbands and never travel alone, only adding to the local residents' fears of exactly what Gal'ott is asking his fellows to do.

At the time the PCs arrive, the two local leaders are debating the best path with great passion and volume. The arrival of the PCs and the refugee githzerai from Akma'ad disrupt any disagreements or discussions happening inside the building, as the githzerai gather around the newcomers seeking news of the summit that was supposed to happen at Akma'ad.

Local Problems

In addition to discussing what happened at Akma'ad, the local githzerai relate the problems that they have been having here in Sayre. They are not sure why, as they have done nothing to provoke the response, but the people of the city have turned against them. As a result, even arriving as they have with Odos, the two arguing leaders cease all discussion as soon as the adventurers enter the room. Only after Odos has spoken up on their behalf—something he does immediately—are the PCs informed of what's been happening to githzerai in the city since their arrival.

Guards harass them and limit their movements, beggars attack them and spy on them, and any robbery or attack that occurs in the city is being blamed on the githzerai. Even more worrisome, four githzerai out on their own at night have been brutally slain by someone using knives. The other githzerai have been unable to locate the killer, and the city guard seems disinterested in helping, claiming that other githzerai are committing the crimes as they "turn on one another like a pack of rabid dogs." The racism and hatred is growing. They blame the githyanki Telicanthus for this, although they have no solid proof and he publicly urges moderation against the githzerai.

An Old Friend

Amyria heard that the PCs arrived in town in the company of Odos and the githzerai refugees of Akma'ad, so she headed to Riverdown to wait their arrival. Amyria will not seek out the PCs at the River Jewel. If the adventurers have parted ways with Odos and do not come with him to Riverdown, a street urchin soon arrives at their inn with a message from the githzerai leader requesting their presence.

The Githzerai Debate

Through decisions made by the githzerai leadership, the PCs have the opportunity to influence how thousands of githzerai interact with the defenders of the mortal world during the upcoming war. Do they stay neutral? Help humans? Assassinate Telicanthus and flee the city, leaving the PCs to pick up the pieces? The githzerai elder Odos will ultimately decide his people's course of action, and it's up to the PCs to help convince him. During the skill challenge and discussion, here are the individuals who hold strong opinions on the subject.

Amyria. Amyria is wise, quiet, and completely sincere. The deva has dark gray skin with faint purple markings, and is vehemently opposed to assassinating Telicanthus. Not only does she think it would be a death sentence for the martyrs who attempted it, she fears that the political backlash from all of his friends would put every githzerai in the city at risk. Worse, assuming it is he behind a possible githyanki communication web, she isn't sure that killing him would stop it; he might be completely innocent. She is in favor of more investigation, and revealing Telicanthus as a fraud and traitor before dealing with him publicly. That way the githzerai can't possibly be blamed. She will also point out that Sayre hasn't been attacked by githyanki yet, and that may be because Telicanthus is alive, although they have no way to know for sure.

Gal'ott. Gal'ott is a young githzerai leader with a fiery temper and great pride. He is tired of being mistreated by the other races, whom he considers inferior to the githzerai. The very fact that they would allow a githyanki in their midst makes them suspect. He is mistrustful, and thinks that he should lead a small group of githzerai into Telicanthus's mansion to kill him.

Azitt: This younger, female githzerai has grown quite close to Amyria in the short time she has known her. She has lived in Sayre for a while and remembers a time when githzerai were not treated so poorly. While she doesn't have much of a voice in the proceedings, she represents a large enough faction of local githzerai that Gal'ott has been forced to recognize her.

Chend. Chend is an elderly githzerai who favors leaving the humans and the githyanki to their war. He thinks they should leave the plane until the war is decided, then deal with the survivors. Odos knows Chend from long ago and values the elder's views.

Gallia. This githzerai from Akma'ad is a traitor, as a githyanki destroyed her soul when it possessed her body months ago. In the unlikely event that she hasn't yet been revealed, she will side with Chend and favor the githzerai abandoning the mortal plane. In this case, allow the PCs another DC 21 Insight check to see if they notice Gallia's possession yet.

Most Exalted Odos from the House of Reprisal: Now that he has had time to calm down after the siege of Akma'ad, Odos remains neutral as to what the githzerai should do. He personally favors killing Telicanthus and then abandoning the plane, but is willing to listen to each argument before he makes his decision. He knows that Amyria wishes him to join her Coalition, but is not sure that he wants anything to do with the mortal world and its defense against the githyanki threat. All the githzerai respect Odos's final decision, as the last remaining principal elder on the mortal world. But if the PCs fail in "The Debate" skill challenge and the githzerai leave the city for parts unknown, Azitt stays behind to act as a companion and assistant to Amyria in her work with the Coalition.

However they arrive, once they reach the githzerai settlement, Amyria emerges from a back chamber, concealed in a heavy, floor-length cloak.

Roleplaying Encounter: Reconnecting with Amyria (page 87).

Convincing Odos

Bringing Odos around to Amyria's point of view is the first task she gives the PCs in Sayre. She knows she needs another ally on the Coalition who will echo her call for solidarity, as well as the importance of discovering the githyanki's means of communication and expanding the breadth of the Coalition to include other cities and regions of the world. This skill challenge should happen shortly after the characters have caught up with Amyria and been able to observe the fractured state of the githzerai community in Sayre.

Skill Challenge: SC1. The Debate (page 89).

Interpreting Clues

The PCs don't have enough information yet to reach any conclusions about Telicanthus, but it may be worthwhile for them to consider what clues they do have. If they have convinced Odos (see "The Debate" on page 89), he might have brought up the idea of using ritual magic to aid their investigation. Alternatively, they might think of this tactic themselves. However, there are other ways to learn about Telicanthus. Possible leads include the following:

- The magical piece of blue stained glass held by the githyanki captain at Akma'ad.
- The magical green stained glass held by Gallia.
- Amyria's dream of a web, with the spider inside of Sayre (see "Reconnecting with Amyria on page 87).
- The odd fact that Sayre's beggars seem to hate githzerai, despite no provocation.
- Someone in the city killing githzerai.

Some of these clues can be investigated in Sayre; for instance, the PCs already have an invitation to Telicanthus's mansion for tea the next afternoon, and they can easily learn more about the beggars in the city by tailing one back to Covet House (see "The Debate" on page 89 for details).

Ambush in the Plaza

Secretly hired by Telicanthus to attack and kill anyone emerging from Kark'din, a trained band of beggars waits in the plaza outside the githzerai sanctuary. These are not the city's normal cadre of beggars. Telicanthus hired a group of mercenaries known as the Laughing Shadows to do his dirty work for him. Composed of an assortment of spies, thieves, and strongarms, the Laughing Shadows now pose as Telicanthus's household guards, as well as beggars tasked with eliminating any githzerai they encounter singly in the city. The Laughing Shadows have been so effective at infiltrating Sayre's beggar population that most of the native beggars don't even realize that they've been compromised. But they've certainly all bought off on the fun of singling out the githzerai as a target of scorn and fear.

The Laughing Shadow beggars attack the PCs when they leave the building, unless they exit with a large group of githzerai as well. After a successful or unsuccessful attack, any surviving beggars scatter.

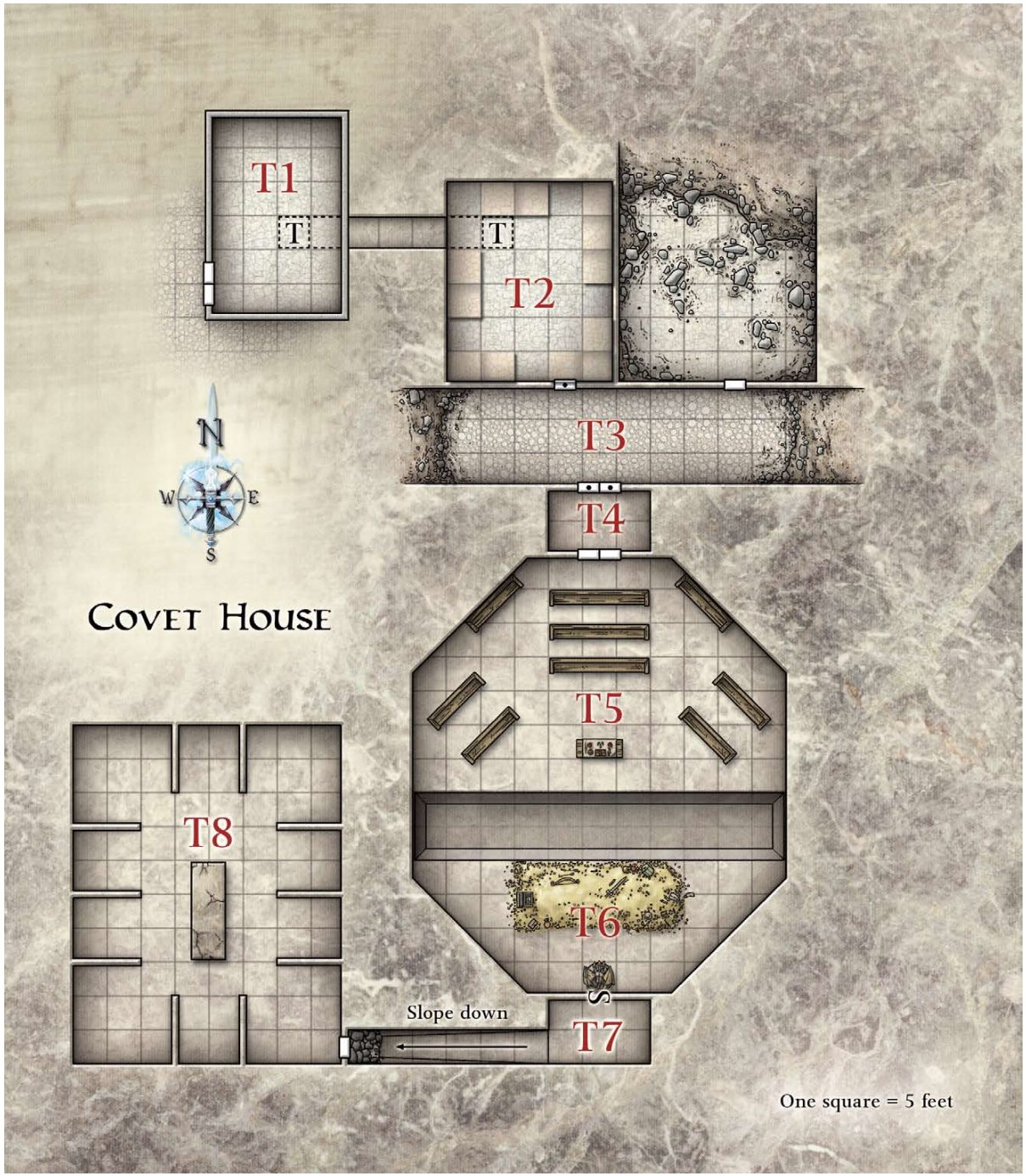
Tactical Encounter: P1. Ambush in the Plaza (page 90).

Covet House

If the attack by the beggars in "The Ambush" encounter doesn't make the PCs suspicious enough to investigate, the mention of a spice house in "The Debate" might. The spice house referred to in the divination (see "The Debate" on page 89) is a warehouse in Lowbridge that was abandoned a decade ago but still smells faintly of exotic spices. The faded and chipped paint over the boarded main doors specifies "Ridolfi and Sons, Spice Merchants." This building is the secret entrance to Covet House, a Temple of Tiamat kept up by the city's beggars. The PCs can find it with a DC 18 Streetwise check. If the adventurers didn't perform the ritual, they can still find the spice house after the "Ambush" tactical encounter. All the "beggars" who attack the heroes smell strongly of old spices. A successful Streetwise check is sufficient to point the characters in the direction of Covet House.

A young homeless child sits across the street from Covet House. If she sees the PCs investigating the doorway, she shuffles over and asks them for money. If she's convinced that they plan to break in, she departs and goes around the side of the house to a cleverly concealed rope pull coming out of the building's foundations. She gives the rope three short pulls, the signal for trouble. No beggars in Covet House or the Temple will be surprised if she has this chance to warn them. The PCs can determine her intentions with a DC 18 Insight check.

The door to Covet House appears to be boarded up. In truth, it's locked with a combination of nails and knotholes that need to be manipulated in a certain order to open it. A DC 23 Thievery check is sufficient to unlock the door, although failing the check sounds an internal alarm bell, warning those inside.



T1. Entry

The spice house's interior is 20 feet by 30 feet, and is mostly unlit. Dim light is provided by light that seeps in through cracks in the wooden exterior. The building lacks any staircase to the upper floors, as it rotted out years ago. The actual floor is covered with rubble, and the sound of squeaking rats can be heard. The smell of spices is very strong inside the building. A DC 21 Perception check reveals a clear trail through the rubble. This trail ends at a hidden trapdoor in the floor. The trapdoor is trapped.

Daggerspring Floor **Level 13 Lurker**
Trap 800 XP

The ceiling above the trapdoor is rigged to collapse if the trap on the trapdoor isn't first disarmed. If triggered, a pile of old garbage, debris, and disease-ridden rats is dropped on the trapdoor square and all adjacent squares. Any character in one of the affected squares is subject to the trap.

Perception
✦ DC 23: The character discovers the trap on the trapdoor.

Trigger
Any creature that attempts to open the trapdoor without first disabling the trap sets it off.

Attack
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Targets: All creatures in burst
Attack: +16 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + 8 damage. On a critical hit, the target is knocked prone and subject to the secondary attack. All affected squares become difficult terrain.
Secondary Attack: +16 vs. Fortitude; 5 damage, and the target is infected with cackle fever (see *Dungeon Master's Guide* page 49).
Miss: Half damage.

Countermeasures
✦ A character adjacent to the trapdoor can disable the trap with a DC 23 Thievery check.

This trapdoor opens into a short pit 5 feet deep. This pit is the entrance to a narrow tunnel only 4 feet

tall that must be navigated on hands and knees by Medium characters. The tunnel runs for 30 feet east under the street, and ends in a second trapdoor in the floor of the tunnel. It is completely dark.

T2. The Entrance

This counterweighted trapdoor in the tunnel from area T1 opens downward, and is effectively punched into the ancient roof of a buried building. Carved into the wood of the trapdoor are the words "Give, and you will be given to" in Common. The door can only be opened on this side by sliding a coin into a slot next to the door, or with a DC 23 Thievery check.

A rope ladder hangs beneath the trapdoor, leading 20 feet down onto the filthy floor of one of Auger's original buildings. This stone-walled building used to have interior floors as well, but they have rotted away. If the warning bell has been rung by the girl outside, or the PCs failed to correctly pick the door lock the first time and set off the alarm, there will be several Laughing Shadows scrabblers here.

Tactical Encounter: T2: The Entrance (page 92).

T3. Ancient Street

This area was once an open street in the old city of Auger, but it was completely filled with mud and silt when the city was destroyed. This section of the street was excavated several generations ago, and has since served as a sleeping place and shelter to generations of beggars. Stopped up by silt and soil on either end, this 50-foot-long section of roadway is lined with ancient cobblestones and filled with sleeping pallets and the meager possessions of dozens of people. Another forgotten building, this one choked with rubble, stands next to the one from which the PCs have just emerged. Across the street is the excavated entrance to what was once a grand temple of Ioun. The icon of Ioun above the doorway has been ripped off, however, leaving no sign as to whom the temple is now dedicated.

T4. Temple Doors

The outer doors to the temple are unlocked. The vestibule is 10 feet long, and the walls of either side have an amateurish painting of a beautiful woman standing on a mountain of wealth, holding out her arms invitingly. A DC 18 Religion check reveals this to be a painting of a human aspect of Tiamat, goddess of greed and envy.

The inner door is closed, trapped but not locked. Several worshipers are engaged in worship when the PCs crash Covet House, and if no one from area T2 has escaped to raise the alarm, no one inside the temple will notice the adventurers' approach. The inner door has the painted image of a five-headed dragon on it, crouched over a mound of treasure. The mound is worn down by the passage of many greedy hands.

T5. Covet House Temple

This temple of Ioun was built hundreds of years ago and was badly damaged when Auger was destroyed by githyanki 400 years ago. It has since been excavated and restored by Sayre's population of beggars. The Filth King, a corrupt human who rules the beggars of the city, found it when digging into the undercity almost fifteen years ago. A devotee of Tiamat already, he repurposed the chapel into a church to the goddess of greed. The purpose of the temple is to remind these worshipers that everyone else has a better life than they do. The temple inspires envy, even as it provides a place to worship it. As such, every single pew appears more comfortable to sit in than the place you are actually sitting. A subtle magical effect makes everyone else in the room seem more wealthy and attractive, and causes the viewer to view himself as shabbier that he really is.

The room is octagonal, with nine pews facing an altar. Rough paintings on the walls show beggars staring through windows, watching rich people eat a feast on golden plates. Behind the altar is a pit that runs the length of the room. It is 10 feet wide and 20 feet deep. The bottom of the pit is empty except for more than a dozen failed thieves' skeletons, along with a handful of coins that fell when being tossed over onto the pile of treasure (area T6). There is no ladder up from the bottom of the pit; anyone who falls in must climb up the sheer walls (Athletics DC 23). For anyone standing in the room, the glittering pile of wealth lying across a black gulf of the pit has an almost unmistakable attraction, even with a rough statue of Tiamat looking down on it.

Unless he has been alerted of their approach, the Filth King is leading a devotional prayer to Tiamat as the PCs enter.

Tactical Encounter: T5. Covet House Temple (page 94).

T6. The Guardian of Greed

On the far side of the pit, a large pile of wealth beckons the greedy. This contains many, many coins along with a handful of art objects. After the Filth King and his followers in Covet House have been defeated, it is likely that the PCs will cross the pit onto this pile of wealth at T6. This activates the coin golem, guardian of Tiamat's tribute.

Tactical Encounter: T6. The Guardian of Greed (page 97).

T7. Secret Corridor

This corridor hasn't been entered since the temple was first converted to Tiamat. At that time, beggars descended this corridor and heard the sounds of scratching from room T8. They fled back up the corridor and built the statue in front of the secret door. Later generations have forgotten that this corridor even exists.

The ramp slopes steeply downward. It ends in a small pile of stone rubble that has fallen from the ceiling and blocked the door behind it. This rubble can be moved easily. The door behind it leads into the Vault of Knowledge. The door is stuck and requires a DC 18 Strength check to pull open. A faint, flickering light can be seen from beneath the doorway once the rubble is clear.

T8. Vault of Knowledge

When the githyanki attacked the town of seers, many people were unable to escape. In the vaults beneath the temple of Ioun, a senior librarian and his research aides were sealed in the vault of knowledge. After the dragon attack burst the dam and a wall of water and silt hit the city, a fallen ceiling block trapped them in the undervault of the library. The librarians were unable to pry open the door, and no help came for them. In the light of magical lanterns, trapped underground and buried under water and rubble, they slowly starved to death.

"Read," advised the Senior Librarian, and so they read as they died. They kept reading even after life had left them. After two hundred years, when the books and scrolls were starting to disintegrate, what was once the senior librarian declared that they must preserve the words for all eternity. At his instruction, and with nothing to carve with except their own finger bones, the aides began to transcribe every sentence from every scroll onto the rock walls of the secret library. It took them more than a hundred years to finish, and the last of their sanity ebbed away with their flesh. Now the archivists and bone scribes wait and read the words written on the walls, desperate for new information to consume and document.

When the PCs pry open this door, they begin a tactical encounter.

Tactical Encounter: T8. Vault of Knowledge (page 98).

After Covet House

The PCs might wish to return to their inn or return to the githzerai sanctuary of Kark'din. If night hasn't fallen, they can also explore the city and research Telicanthus, the Bitter Glass, and the location of Auglos's tower in Auger. They now have enough knowledge to understand that a device in the city is allowing the githyanki to communicate with one another. They may not yet have proof that Telicanthus is involved, however.

The PCs may proceed however they like until Amyria brings them to meet members of her Coalition the next morning. If they seem frustrated or uncertain how to proceed, allow Amyria to come by and urge their patience, since more will become clear after the meeting with her Coalition.

The Coalition

Members of the Coalition that Amyria has managed to put together are in Sayre, but she's disappointed that they've spent days bickering and disagreeing about the best way to shatter the githyanki military alliance. (In fact, they haven't even been able to agree on a name for the group, which is why Amyria refers to the group as the Coalition. She hopes something more inspiring will come out of their talks that will help bind the leaders together.) She hopes that the PCs' reputations (all the members have heard about the successful defense of Elsir Vale at this point), their investigation of Telicanthus and the Bitter Glass, and the membership of their new githzerai ally, Odos, will help the alliance find focus.

The deva meets the PCs fairly early at their inn, waking them if necessary. Odos is with her. The weather is beautiful outside, and Amyria suggests that they walk over to the meeting place for the Coalition in the center of the city. It takes about 15 minutes for the group to reach a beautiful old building in the March. Amyria mentions that the building was once used for town meetings, but not currently. She has rented it for use as a central meeting place for her allies.

The PCs walk up a large marble staircase to the second floor, where Amyria opens a set of double doors into a circular room dominated by a large semicircular table. The room is filled with strangers of various races, all swept up in the heat of argument. They all look up when Amyria enters, and she introduces everyone to the PCs and Odos.

The Coalition is divided, much as the githzerai had been the day before. A reactive nature and a lack of clear leadership has led them to second guess their best strategy.

Skill Challenge: SC2. The Coalition (page 100).

The Members

Amyria has not finished forming her group to oppose the githyanki, but has made great progress. Members of the Coalition include:

Kalad: Last seen in "Siege of Bordrin's Watch" when he was rescued by the PCs, this heavily muscled dwarven paladin no longer looks quite as haunted as he did in the tunnels of Bordrin's Watch. He is gruff but friendly, and a staunch ally of the PCs. Kalad also has spoken to Amyria several times, and he backs her unflinchingly. Unfortunately, his seemingly blind willingness to support the deva makes him look intractable and foolish to the more politically savvy members of the Coalition, and his staunch support has almost proved a liability from time to time. If Kalad didn't survive "Siege of Bordrin's Watch" in your campaign, that's okay. The priest of Moradin in Overlook called in several favors and had Kalad's body sent across the land to have a ritual of Raise Dead performed on it. He has been tasked with representing Overlook's interests in Amyria's Coalition.

Fariex the Scalehammer: This adult copper dragon has an unhealthy interest in the activities of humans. He has spent his life in human or elven form, living in human cities and studying their ways. He is light-hearted by nature, and knows more jokes than most jesters. He is far from a buffoon, however, and expects respect. His one weakness is a tendency to weigh the facts of a problem instead of quickly making up his mind.

Fariex has the ability to assume the shape of a human, and he does this at all Coalition meetings—or anywhere else he's encountered in the city, for that matter. He does not openly reveal his true nature, but passes himself off as a powerful merchant with interests in various cities. Fariex does not represent a city or other political body, but was invited because of his connections to many far-reaching settlements, townships, and ports, and the wealth and military might they represent. In meetings, Fariex is mostly quiet, but will occasionally interject a pointed question, especially if the topic of conversation touches on his area of expertise (namely, money and its movement through business affairs). He also has an interesting sense of humor, and will sometimes try to openly catch others in duplicity or engage in some word play over a statement he perceives as absurd. The richest member of the Coalition, Fariex is a key player to ally with, since he can fund many of the operations the Coalition is ambitiously interested in pursuing.

Caliandra of the Stagrunners: This ancient elf can trace her descendants back to elves who migrated from the Feywild almost eleven of her generations ago. She leads not only her own tribe, the Stagrunners, but has also been named the voice of all the tribes that live in the wild reaches to the north and west of Elsir Vale. All told, she speaks for a group of twenty-five tribes.

Fierce, wild, and haughty, she is stubborn and opinionated, and isn't afraid to engage in a protracted argument about aspects of history that most people have long forgotten. She holds influence with many gnome, elf, and eladrin leaders, much as a respected grandmother and advisor might. In a crisis, she leans toward solutions that provide the most safety for the most people. She seems to expect

subservience, making Caliandra nearly intolerable to deal with. But she also has tremendous in-roads among the barbarian tribes she represents, making her a valuable asset.

One of the naysayers of the Coalition, Caliandra automatically assumes her age and experience make her the voice everyone else should listen to. She talks loudly, fiercely, and often, but she doesn't mince words. She gets to her point quickly. She favors action of some sort, but is like a ship in need of a pilot. If given a course that she can approve of—something that will let her lead her people to glorious battle against the invaders who have killed so many of her people—she will fight honorably and without hesitation. But she demands respect, and is fond of rejecting someone else's idea out of hand, only to bring it back up minutes later as a concept all her own.

Lord Divian Torrance: The ruler of Sayre, elected by a fellowship of scholars and merchants, is a potent and skilled politician. His goal, first and foremost, is to see that his city comes out ahead in the war. He's not willing to side with the githyanki invaders, but his goal is to lead this Coalition so that his small city is given due representation. He knows that Sayre's leadership wouldn't have been consulted if not for the good fortune of hosting the first meeting and the absence of a representative from Nefelus, Amyria's first choice to host the meeting. But he plans to make the most of the opportunity and makes it clear at every opportunity how relevant and important Sayre is to the coming conflicts. Lord Torrance can be wooed if he firmly believes Sayre will continue to be an important player. He is opposed to any plan that deals with bringing Nefelus into the Coalition, although he won't openly say so. He's worried that if Nefelus brings their magical expertise and knowledge to the Coalition, Sayre's position as a center of knowledge will be dramatically weakened. Thankfully, this isn't an issue that is likely to rear its head . . . yet.

Quelenna Entromiel: The female eladrin Quelenna Entromiel rules over the mercantile settlement of Dornaithos, which trades both fine craftwork (including goods from the Feywild) and everyday items. She has dealings with the Elsir Consortium, a group of merchants from the Elsir Vale, and with traders in every major settlement across this corner of the mortal world. Gregarious and shrewd, Quelenna is well known for her business acumen and efficiency. It's rumored she's not afraid to resort to bribery if doing so will get a project or deal finished quickly. Quelenna wants Dornaithos's fortunes to continue and thinks running the Coalition is a way to make herself more prominent and secure better deals for Dornaithos to provide war material. While the Coalition's first order of business is not to determine a leader, she already has her sights set on the position.

Inogo Dravitch: A priest of Erathis, Inogo hails from the distant city of Sherrbyr. This city lies far to the northeast, beyond Elsir Vale by at least three weeks' travel. Inogo is the current leader of this city of temples. A theocratic city state, Sherrbyr also boasts a massive college of divinity, where worshipers of nearly any deity can openly practice their faith.

As a result of its varied populace, the city's leadership is formed of a council of priests of the most worshiped deities in the city. The council changes as the population changes. Some deities fall out of favor while others rise. But Erathis's worshipers have been a power in the city for years, and Inogo is the most recent in a long series of Erathis-worshiping council leaders known as Deacons.

Sherrbyr is a city accustomed to nearly endless debate, thanks to efforts to accommodate every faith represented on the ruling council. As someone long schooled in this approach to government, Deacon Dravitch is well out of his league in a group that needs to make decisions quickly and decisively. He represents a powerful city, however, in terms of both its military and divine might. Sherrbyr could field a veritable army of healers, as well as a mounted corps of paladins. Inogo is mostly quiet in Coalition meetings, speaking up only when a plan of action is proposed. He is, at first, unwilling to commit any resources without first "exploring other options" or his personal favorite, "negotiating with these githyanki to help them see reason." Odos despises Inogo immediately, and Inogo reciprocates. As Sherrbyr has yet to experience anything like the githzerai have at the hands of the invaders (in fact, Sherrbyr has been entirely spared, to this point), it's an understandable attitude.

Odos: The githzerai leader firmly believes that Telicanthus is up to no good, and while he is mostly quiet in all proceedings, when the issue of the githyanki noble inevitably surfaces, he doesn't hesitate to make his opinion known. This is true whether or not the characters succeeded in "The Debate" skill challenge (see page 89). If the PCs failed at the skill challenge, Odos can still be persuaded here, but he calls for Telicanthus's head at these opportunities rather than backing Amyria's call to investigate the powerful merchant. This drives Lord Torrance to distraction, and Odos quickly finds himself on the outs with many other members of the Coalition. But Odos represents githzerai all over the mortal world and beyond, and he knows the githyanki tactics and agendas. He's perhaps the singlemost important ally in the defense of

the world, and most of the other Coalition members know this—even if they won't admit it openly.

Amyria: Not a member of the Coalition, the extremely passionate and charismatic deva paladin has rallied these leaders to meet in Sayre to discuss the invasion. While she doesn't have a vote on a course of action, she has the right to speak freely—something she hesitates to take advantage of in this first meeting. When she does speak, Amyria almost glows with her inspiration and belief in what is right.

Tea Party

For his invitation to tea, Telicanthus will send a carriage to pick up the PCs at their inn in the early afternoon, after their meeting with the Coalition. The carriage will arrive at Telicanthus's mansion on Prospect Hill at exactly the proper time. Telicanthus himself comes out to warmly greet his guests. If the PCs are inappropriately dressed or bear weapons, he looks a bit surprised, but is too polite to mention it. Telicanthus invites the heroes into his home and ushers them into the tea room, where he introduces them to the other guests.

Telicanthus's home is beautiful. It is tastefully decorated with the finest art that comes out of Sayre's robust artistic community. Paintings of local nature and city scenes hang on the walls next to beautiful tapestries; his porcelain and dishware are exquisitely crafted, and his food the finest available. Superb stained glass fills many of his windows, most of which he modestly claims that he crafted himself. Exceptionally talented musicians behind screens play light background music that invariably delights guests. Even the air smells nice, scented by exotic perfumes that Telicanthus buys in the Glassworks. Everything about his residence denotes taste and class.

The Guests

Several other guests have been invited to partake in Telicanthus's party, in addition to the Heroes of Elsir Vale.

Lord Divian Torrance (Governor of Sayre): A brilliant half-elven politician, Torrance keeps the city safe by circumventing or misdirecting any true threat before it can even manifest. Lord Torrance is an elected official, brought to power by powerful merchants and scholars who don't have political ambitions, but want to be free to conduct their business with minimal government interference. This arrangement has worked surprisingly well, as most merchants police their own organizations to prevent criminal or underhanded dealings from disturbing the peace of Sayre. The Lord suspects that Telicanthus is more than he seems, but he also suspects that Telicanthus's presence in the city is keeping it safe from attacks. That's not something he wants to risk without good cause. Telicanthus is too important politically

and socially for the Lord to accuse of a crime unless he has incontrovertible proof.

Of course, the characters have already met Lord Torrance at their meeting that morning, but Telicanthus is unaware of this. For his part, Divian acts ignorant of the characters, although if they bring up their meeting, he acknowledges that he knows them with a gracious nod. Telicanthus takes in the exchange without expression, regardless of how the PCs behave.

Lady Catherine Torrance (Lord Torrance's wife): Lady Catherine is human, and just as sharp as her husband. Her polite and informal banter usually hides piercing, meaningful questions. She hopes that a light laugh and a quick smile are enough to deflect any interest in her husband's business . . . or her own. Any information she does learn she passes on to her husband, and she may be used as the intermediary if Lord Torrance wishes to pass any messages or information to the PCs.

General Alvro Taramin (Commander of the city guard): Taramin is an elderly tiefling soldier who is keenly aware that he doesn't have enough troops under his direct command to protect the city in the case of an invasion. He questions the PCs closely about the tactics that were used at Overlook and Akma'ad, so that he has some hope of countering invaders if worse comes to worst. He doesn't know that Telicanthus has quietly encouraged Lord Torrance to reduce funding to Sayre's military, but he would be furious with Torrance if told.

Archdean Isabelle Grimaldi (Archdean of the Sayre University): The archdean of the university is a middle-aged, attractive human woman with a keen mind for magical research. She's a bit absentminded when it comes to small talk, and she tends to turn conversations toward subjects with which she's more familiar. That means that any conversation with her might suddenly turn to monster dissection and alchemical theory. She's not shy about being single, and can be somewhat forward to men she finds attractive. Unfortunately, she tends to develop crushes on war heroes.

Baranor the Black: This retired human adventurer has kept his riches even as the years have weakened his combat prowess. Now in his eighties, he's happy to regale his listeners with astonishing tales of his youth, even if they don't always sound factual. He has a little more trouble remembering the names of his new friends. Almost completely deaf, Baranor carries a horn to aid his hearing and a cane to help with his aching knees. He also lives next door to Telicanthus, in a smaller and less elaborate home.

Telicanthus's Mansion

The mansion grounds are described below. When the PCs arrive at the party, feel free to provide them with the details of the mansion as they wander around, but also proceed to the skill challenge.

Skill Challenge: SC3. Telicanthus's Tea Party (page 105).

M1. The Hedge and Front Gate

Telicanthus's estate is mostly bordered by an 8-foot-tall hedge, enough to keep out the casual burglar while still appearing attractive. The front gate is guarded by two human guards, 24 hours a day. These sentries are members of the Laughing Shadows, and are tougher than any of the mercenaries hired by othe merchants or nobles.

Servants and workmen enter through the rear gate (M20) instead of this one, but during the day, a servant stands here with an appointment book. He consults this book when visitors arrive to determine who has a legitimate appointment to see Telicanthus and who does not. If there is a conflict or confusion about a possible appointment, he often sets up a potential appointment several hours hence and then confirm with Telicanthus before the visitors' return.

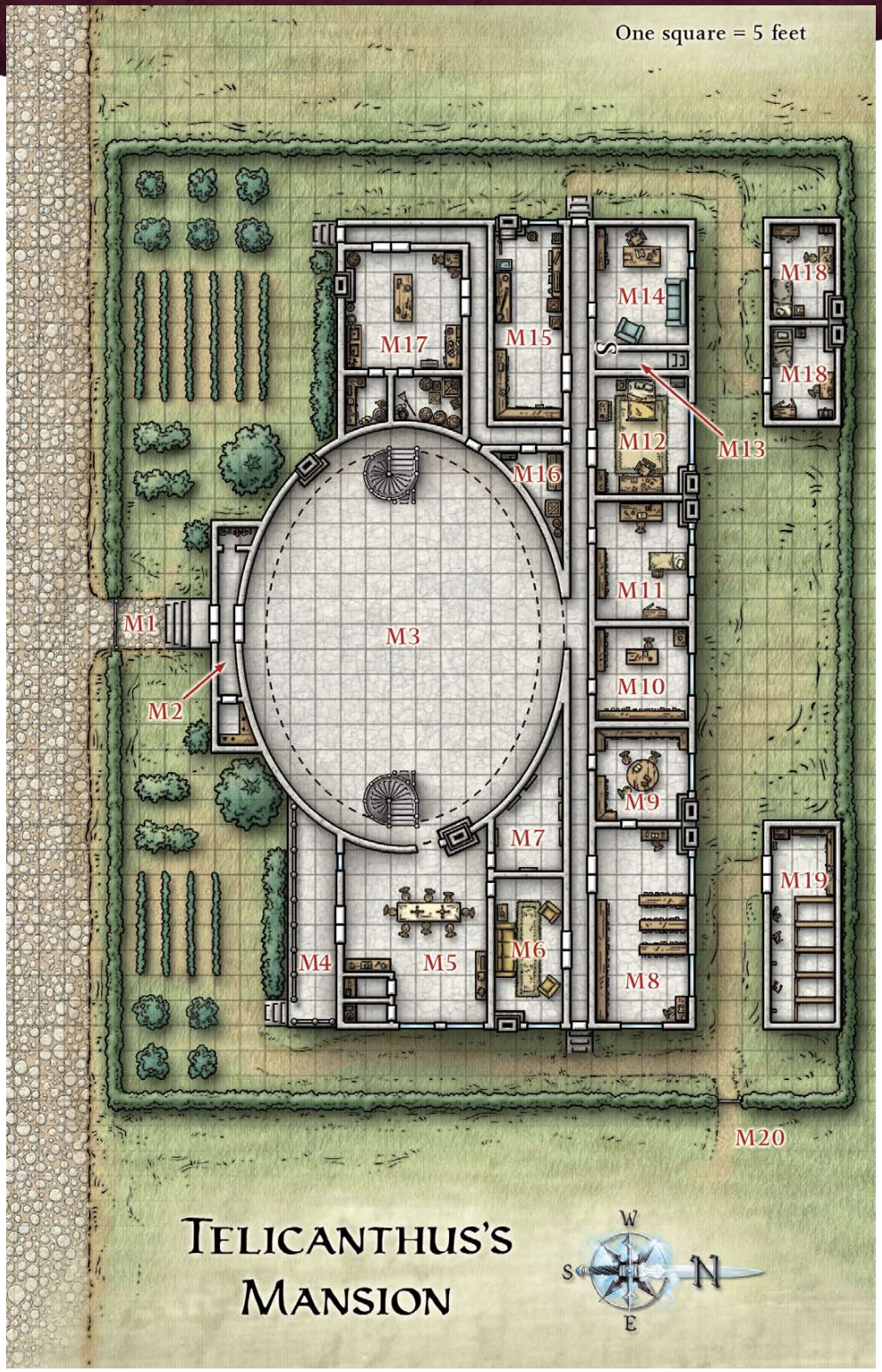
Laughing Shadow Sentry	**Level 11 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 600
Initiative +9	**Senses** Perception +13
HP 47; **Bloodied** 23	
AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23	
Speed 5	
⨁ **Halberd** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d10 + 4 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the sentry's next turn.	
⨽ **Halberd Sweep** (immediate interrupt; usable when a target the sentry has marked leaves a square within reach; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Reach 2; +16 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target's movement ends and it slides 2 squares.	
⨽ **Halberd Trip** (standard; requires halberd; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d10 + 4 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
⤖ **Crossbow** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Ranged 15/30; +16 vs. AC; 2d8 + 2 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Streetwise +11	
Str 18 (+9)	**Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 16 (+8)
Con 16 (+8)	**Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 13 (+6)
Equipment scale armor, halberd, crossbow with 20 bolts	

M2. Vestibule

This vestibule has a cloakroom and two lavatories. Doors are typically locked at night (Thievery DC 21) unless Telicanthus is hosting a party, but are unlocked during the day.

M3: The Great Hall

This domed room is a full 90 feet across, and has a balcony circling it 20 feet off the ground. The floor



is polished marble tile, and beautiful paintings and statues ring the room. This is the room used for grand balls and parties. During the day, the room usually has only a paucity of furniture in it.

M4. Porch

This outside porch overlooks the gardens, and has comfortable chairs and small tables.

M5. Tea Room

The area where Telicanthus takes tea looks out onto well tended gardens and features a table large enough to sit several guests. Windows line the walls, and a discreet lavatory stands at one corner of the room.

M6. Parlor

The parlor is where musicians typically play during teatime. This room has formal furniture, a portrait of Telicanthus over the fireplace, and a wall of books about many different religions that have probably never been read.

M7. Portrait Gallery

This portrait gallery ostensibly has portraits of several generations of Telicanthus's family, both male and female relatives of all ages. In truth, Telicanthus commissioned one artist to paint every single portrait, taking aspects of Telicanthus's facial features to manufacture images of realistic-looking relatives.

M8. Library

The library is a comfortable room with stained glass on the upper windows. The walls are lined with bookcases. Most of the books are on either stained glass manufacture or the history of Sayre and Auger, including quite a few tomes that include rough maps of the ancient city. Other subjects include archi-

tecture, mining, books about good manners, racial customs, the social registry of Sayre, and more.

M9. Reading Room

This reading room has a small bar, several very comfortable chairs, and a small table.

M10. Pennel's Office

This is the office for Telicanthus's secretary and bodyguard, Pennel. The door to the office is locked (Thievery DC 21 to open), although the PCs might have the key (see "Telicanthus's Tea Party" on page 65). The desk is piled with paperwork detailing the various expenses and purchases that the estate makes. A DC 21 Streetwise check reveals that the estate burns through a truly impressive amount of money each month. A DC 21 Insight check reveals that Telicanthus seems to be paying for substantially more food on a daily basis than his household staff could eat, even taking into account the parties he throws. It appears to be enough for an additional 15–20 people each day.

In addition, a DC 21 Perception check reveals a key to Telicanthus's office in the top drawer of Pennel's desk.

M11. Pennel's Bedroom

This is Pennel's bedroom. The door is unlocked. He lives very sparsely; little in this room shows any sort of personality. Compared to the rest of the house, the room seems bare. In reality, Pennel is both a bodyguard and assassin in addition to being a top-notch secretary. Telicanthus has set him to stalk and kill githzerai in his spare hours, a task that Pennel readily accepts. He keeps spare cash locked in a small chest within his wardrobe (DC 23 Thievery to pick), along with his preferred knives and any clothing he's recently bloodied. If the characters poke around here, a DC 23 Heal check indicates the blood currently staining Pennel's clothing—which has a peculiar tint that a DC 18 Arcana check can identify as githzerai blood—is no more than two days old. This is the date of the most recent attack on a githzerai.

M12. Telicanthus's Bedroom

Telicanthus's bedroom is just as richly decorated as the rest of his house, but a DC 21 Insight check reveals that there are no memories of the Astral Sea or the githyanki homeland. This may seem unusual, and stems from Telicanthus's obsession with maintaining his cover.

His wealth is kept in off-site strongrooms elsewhere in the city, and Telicanthus's bedroom is mostly filled with an extravagantly large bed and wardrobes full of fine clothing.

M13. Hidden Corridor

This narrow corridor is hidden between the walls and accessible only from Telicanthus's office. This narrow hallway is less than 5 feet wide. The stairs at its end lead down to area U1.

M14. Telicanthus's Office

This is Telicanthus's office and sitting room, where he often sits to discuss business with associates. The door to the room is locked (Thievery DC 23 to pick the lock unless the PCs have the key from Pennel's office). The windows are yellow stained glass that let in the sun, and his wide desk is clear of most paper. Telicanthus is careful not to keep anything incriminating here; he keeps the door locked and the papers on his desk for show. On his desk is a large journal detailing guest lists for parties. Other papers include designs for stained glass projects. A small tray on his desk holds attractive shards of stained glass.

A DC 23 Perception check reveals that this room seems slightly narrower than it should be based on the hallway, and that a secret door (leading to area M13) is hidden behind a full length mirror attached to the wall. The mirror is magical, and can be opened by touching it with a piece of stained glass. Discovering this requires a successful DC 21 Arcana or Thievery check. When activated, the mirror becomes fully permeable for 5 rounds and allows passage through to area M13. The passageway in M13 can also be entered by breaking the mirror (Strength DC 15), of course, but that leaves very visible evidence that intruders have passed by.

M15. Workshop

This is Telicanthus's workshop for making stained glass. He has raw materials, dyes, and a small furnace here. A DC 21 Perception check reveals that this workshop has not been used in some time—several weeks at least, and possibly several months. The githyanki smuggles his "work" into the city. It's all constructed in Tu'narath to help Telicanthus keep up his front.

M16. Storage

This storage area holds furniture and paraphernalia often used for parties.

M17. Kitchen

This kitchen has a pantry and store-room attached to it. It is large enough to handle food preparation for more than a hundred people. The cooks on duty refuse to discuss Telicanthus's private business. If

convinced with a DC 18 Intimidate check, however, they admit that they've grown used to cooking more food each day than the household needs. They believe that Telicanthus quietly takes it out of the house and donates it to the poor each day, but they have no evidence to this effect. Pennel simply comes for the food and carries it away each day. In truth, this extra food goes to the githyanki workers in the excavations.

M18. Servant Quarters

These houses provide shared lodging for the mansion's staff. Between cooks, maids, and butlers, Telicanthus employs eight servants.

M19. Stable

This stable holds Telicanthus's carriages and horses.

M20. Rear Gate

This rear gate is where workers, craftsmen, and deliveries come each day. It is less strictly guarded than the front gate, and the guard who is always supposed to be stationed here often takes short breaks to chat with the local help. The gate is typically locked (DC 21 Thievery to open). The guard is also a member of the Laughing Shadows.

Excavations

Telicanthus has unearthed a section of the tower that holds the Bitter Glass beneath his mansion.

U1. Entrance Tunnel

This downward-sloping tunnel runs relatively straight from the stairs that lead to area M13. It is carved into the dirt and reinforced with wooden crossbeams, and ends at a short ladder that leads to the actual excavations below. The ceiling height here is only 5 feet.

U2. False Tunnels

These side tunnels were dug by githyanki while searching for Auglos's tower. They are empty other than loose dirt and the remains of broken tools.

U3. Work Gear

A pile of shovels, picks, and wheelbarrows sits here, abandoned after the tower was found and cleared.

U4. Sleeping Githyanki

This open, excavated cavern with an 8-foot-tall ceiling is where the githyanki excavators sleep between shifts. An additional githyanki sleeps nearby in one of the tunnels. The area has a table with four chairs, piles of food stuffs, casks of liquid, and small piles of belongings. Wooden braces hold up the ceiling.

Tactical Encounter: U4. Sleeping Githyanki (page 107).

U5. Leisure Time

This is the second of three teams of githyanki ritualists. They have recently finished their shift inside the Bitter Glass and are sitting around a small fire, drinking. This area is set off for githyanki who are awake but not performing the ritual, and there is little else for them to do. The area is partially occluded by piles of rubble (difficult terrain). One of these githyanki is Kle'th, the sage brought in to clean and activate the Bitter Glass.

The githyanki are sitting next to the ruins of Auglos's tower. The building is ancient and battered, broken off at the top and badly abused. The walls and floor are dirt. The small alcove at the top of the map is a makeshift privy.

Tactical Encounter: U5. Leisure Time (page 108).

U6. Auglos's Tower

The ground floor seems to have originally been one solid piece of stone. It shattered and fell into the basement when the tower was attached, creating a makeshift ramp that angles downward at a sharp angle. Anyone descending must make a DC 21 Acrobatics check or fall, possibly tumbling into the chasm at the bottom of the ramp. Fighting on this slope requires this Acrobatics check when struck in combat.

U7. Chasm

This chasm has opened up under the tower's basement. The narrow crack descends 30 feet downward. The bottom is filled with rubble.

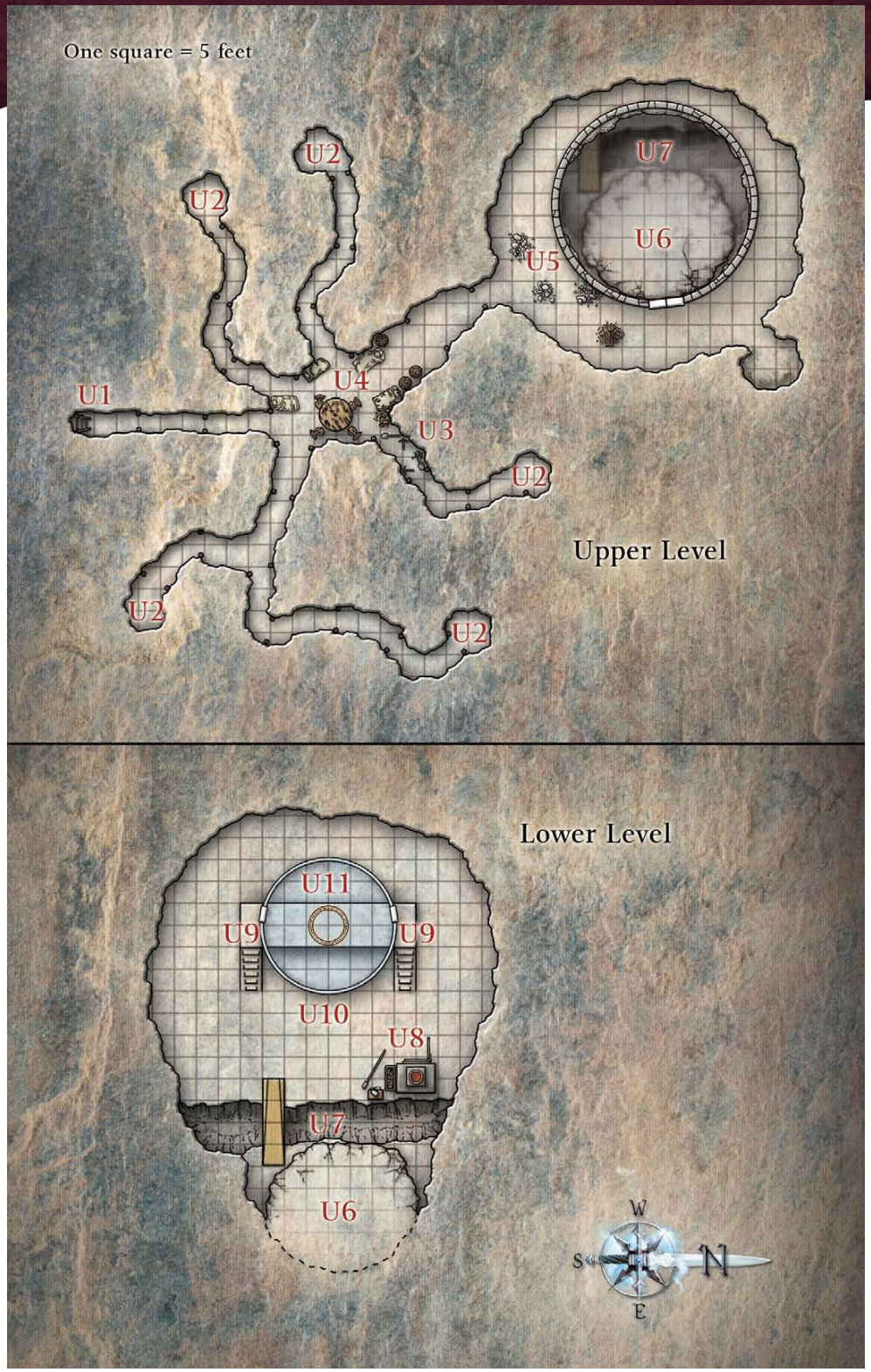
U8. Stained Glass Workshop

This area is Telicanthus's workshop for creating magical stained glass, used as communication devices after being attuned within the Bitter Glass. Delicate, beautiful panes of glass are stacked here. The furnace is a magical device with an intense, smokeless flame that will gutter out if the forge is moved. Anyone moved forcibly into this space takes 4d8+6 fire damage before the flame is extinguished. While not a true craftsman, Telicanthus has enough skill to create these rudimentary pieces.

From this area, faint chanting can be heard coming from the Bitter Glass.

U9. Staircases

These two wooden staircases lead up from the floor of the basement to the doorways on the side of the Bitter Glass. The doorways are not locked.



U10. Inside the Glass

The Bitter Glass is a floating glass sphere exactly 30 feet in diameter. It's clear that someone has recently patched and repaired an older, more beautiful, version of the device. It is made up of stained glass the color of the evening sky, and glowing lights flicker within it. The glass can be entered by two doors along its equator. A 10-foot wide, 30-long glass balcony stretches across the inside middle of the glass. A ritual circle sits in the exact center of the sphere.

Tactical Encounter: U10. Inside the Glass (page 110).

Destroying the Glass

The Bitter Glass will continue to function even after the ritual is stopped. While it is invulnerable to damage from the outside, the inside panes of glass are simple to break. Causing 200 points of damage to the interior of the Bitter Glass destroys it once more. Any linked communication glasses crack and shatter when this happens, but the change might not be immediately obvious to Telicanthus, since he doesn't carry a piece of the glass with him.

Confronting Telicanthus

Attacking or slaying Telicanthus without prior proof of his guilt will be looked upon very poorly by the leadership of Sayre. It's still possible, however, and as the DM you should not go to extreme efforts to discourage the PCs should they prefer to handle him that way.

Confronting him publicly in order to accuse him in front of his peers, however, offers a more satisfying conclusion. This is the solution both Lord Torrance and Amyria propose. Telicanthus is a social person, and he is likely to have at least one member of Sayre's

social elite visiting at whatever time the PCs want to find him. This scene is most effective if Telicanthus is with a great number of people at the time: hosting a masquerade party at his mansion, handling delicate business negotiations while at tea, or throwing a dinner party for his friends in the city.

He laughs off any accusations, hoping that his reputation will see him through. Instead of fighting back, he initially tries to preserve his cover and flees. If the PCs offer proof that the Glass is destroyed, however, he realizes that he no longer needs to keep his cover and will attack with every weapon he possesses. His secretary and bodyguard will attack as well, fighting in and among any guests while he uses them as cover.

Tactical Encounter: Z1. Exposing Telicanthus (page 112).

Concluding the Adventure

With Telicanthus dead or on the run, and Lord Torrance shown the ruins of the Bitter Glass, the PCs have finished the adventure. The PCs receive a mixed response in Sayre if they killed Telicanthus. Until the word gets out that he was actually a spy, they will be treated coldly. But after a few days, when the truth is known, the locals will be more accepting.

Torrance seizes ownership of Telicanthus's mansion and everything in it for the city, and will be pleased to house the PCs there for as long as they require lodging. If the PCs turn him down, he offers use of the house to Odos and the githzerai. (He finds more suitable housing for them regardless.) He prefers to have them nearby; with Telicanthus dead or fled, he isn't sure how long it will be before Sayre is attacked by the githyanki. He immediately increases the city guard and plans for various contingencies. In addition, with the githyanki invaders reeling from the loss of their communication web, the Coalition acts quickly and turns to their prime sources of information—Amyria and the adventurers—for input on the next course of action. Of course, Amyria has a plan that requires the active participation of the heroes . . .

Meeting Tokk'it

Roleplaying Encounter
Encounter Level 11

Running this Encounter

Thie roleplaying encounter begins when the characters approach the *Conqueror*, the crashed githyanki airship.

As the PCs approach the ship, read the following aloud:

The warship leans to one side, and it has clearly been in a fight. Its sails are ragged, and the stern of the ship is charred from intense fire. A humanoid with greenish skin and gray robes stands by the rail, hands held open, waiting for you to approach. He speaks loudly enough for you to hear him at a distance.

"My apologies for the method of my arrival. My name is Tokk'it, and I come asking for help. At this moment, my people are under attack by githyanki. I have heard that there are those in this city of Overlook who are familiar with the githyanki. I seek to stop the githyanki before they breach our fortress and exterminate my brethren. Please, can you tell me where to find those of your people who know of this danger, and if they can help me? Please."

Tokk'it's manner is stiff and formal, as he is uncomfortable asking for help from outsiders. His first move is to ask for "those who defended this city, the Overlook, from General Zithiruun." If the adventurers identify themselves, Tokk'it looks at them suspiciously, refusing to believe that so few could have made such an impact. A DC 16 Diplomacy check is sufficient to convince him, however.

Once the PCs have assured Tokk'it of their authenticity, in his halting manner he explains his situation and asks for immediate help to return with him. Still in some disbelief that the characters could have accomplished so much, he initially insists on more troops from Overlook. Captain Dauralis, silent until this point, leans over to the nearest PC and says that she knows the council will not approve such a move in the wake of the attack on Overlook.

What Tokk'it Knows

Tokk'it can relate the following:

- The githzerai fortress of Akma'ad is some 140 miles southwest of Overlook, and 20 miles north of the city of Sayre.
- Akma'ad currently houses close to 100 githzerai trained to fight, as well as several dozen noncombatants. (He does not yet share that githzerai religious and political leaders were effectively in the middle of a war council.)
- He isn't sure how many githyanki are attacking. He saw three war galleons and at least three lancers, so he guesses two to three hundred troops.
- Tokk'it stole a githyanki ship by waiting until all the githyanki troops had disembarked, then sneaking aboard and slaying the captain. War galleons are designed to be flown with only a one- or two-person skeleton crew, with psychic echoes of possessed githyanki sailors that actually man the sails and rudder.
- Tokk'it's stolen ship was chased and attacked by githyanki lancers mounted on dragons, but he was able to outpace them before they could destroy the vessel; the ship flies faster than the dragons.

Some elements of the attack clearly bother Tokk'it, and others just haven't completely clicked in his mind yet. Some insight and prodding by the PCs can reveal more.

Insight (DC 16): *The fortress already has a defense against just this sort of siege attack, but it wasn't triggered. The fortress is built into a cliff and has a prepared landslide arranged above it, set to crush any foes that stand before the citadel when the landslide is set off. Tokk'it doesn't know why it wasn't activated, but he believes that the githyanki probably killed the githzerai troops responsible for activating it.*

Diplomacy (DC 16): *Tokk'it is happy to help fight. He admits to some combat ability, mostly as a scout. (He seems uncomfortable as he says this; Tokk'it's role in the githzerai hierarchy is currently in question, as explained below.)*

Insight (DC 16): *Tokk'it has no doubt that his attackers are still chasing him, and he takes several opportunities to glance over his shoulder in the direction of Akma'ad. This is the primary reason he wants to start back immediately—before Overlook realizes he's brought more githyanki right to their doorstep.*

Perception (DC 16): *While the galleon is damaged from the fight and the rough landing, Tokk'it believes that it will reach Akma'ad once again.*

Diplomacy (DC 21): *If asked for payment, Tokk'it can pledge the service of githzerai troops to help guard Overlook during the coming war. He is not of high enough rank to work out the details, but is certain that they an accommodation can be reached with his Abbot once the citadel is saved. A follow-up DC 16 Insight check reveals that Tokk'it is genuinely hopeful such an agreement can be reached, but that he's not sure if such a thing is really possible. He doesn't have the authority to make such a guarantee.*

Roleplaying Tokk'it

More pessimistic and morose than most githzerai, Tokk'it has never entirely fit in at Akma'ad. He is a loner at heart who has had trouble focusing his mind and purging it of chaotic emotions. He seldom commands respect, and his peers have difficulty socializing with him since he has imperfectly integrated himself into the community. Even Gallia, the githzerai woman he loves and who left him several months ago, has acknowledged his imperfection of soul. (Tokk'it does not realize that Gallia left him because she was possessed by a githyanki, and is now a spy with no hope of regaining her original personality.)

Akma'ad was playing host to some of the most important political and religious leaders of the githzerai, and Tokk'it's Abbot did not want him embarrassing the monastery with his disordered thinking. As a result, Tokk'it was on a fasting vigil outside of the fortress when the githyanki swooped in to attack.

Tokk'it followed the best strategy he could conceive of: He waited until a githyanki war galleon landed and disgorged its troops, snuck on board, and slew the pilot. He then stole the ship. Realizing too late what was happening, the githyanki attacked it as it departed, but Tokk'it had the element of surprise and a githyanki galleon that was slightly faster than the githyanki's red dragon troops. The ship was badly damaged by the vengeful githyanki as it fled, but Tokk'it managed to outdistance them and escape. He aimed the ship toward the strongest potential ally nearby, the city of Overlook, home of combatants with experience fighting githyanki. But he did this knowing that githyanki dragon troops were certainly chasing him.

Now that he has arrived, he's wondering if he should have piloted the ship to the city of Sayre instead, even though it is farther away. Overlook has clearly been attacked recently and may not have any troops that are willing to help. He is determined to do his duty and try, however. Perhaps he will distinguish himself in this matter and find his place. Perhaps his attempt to be heroic will return Gallia to him.

If the character's take the time to check on Captain Dauralis's claim that Overlook will be unwilling to spare any troops, they can gain an immediate appointment with Councilor Fellstone, a male dwarf. He echoes the Captain's words almost verbatim. Overlook's council is unwilling to pledge troops so soon after the battle, but he does encourage the heroes to assist. Tokk'it doubts that so few people will be able to accomplish much but hides any disappointment. Any help is better than none.

Development

This encounter should convince the adventurers that Tokk'it is exactly what he appears: a very concerned, tenacious, and somewhat reckless githzerai monk who desperately wants to return to his home with aid. His fear and anger are genuine, and he is tremendously grateful for any help the heroes can provide.

D1: Repossession Team

Encounter Level 12 (3,600 XP)

Setup

2 pact dragons (D)
2 githyanki lancers (L)

Two githyanki lancers on specially bred red dragons have been dispatched to retrieve their lost githyanki war galleon. They have been ordered to come back with the stolen ship or to not come back at all.

The PCs might be able to spot the approaching enemies several rounds before they come into combat range of the ship. Have any PC above decks make a Perception check. A character in the crow's nest gets a +5 bonus on the check. A result of 27 or higher will allow the character to see the approaching foes emerge from a cloud 3 rounds before they close with the ship. For every three points lower on the Perception check, the githyanki get 1 round closer to the ship before being seen, up to only one round's notice if the PCs only achieve DC 21. This may give the PCs a chance to gain surprise attacks using ranged weapons or the ship's ballistas.

If the PCs spot the attackers, read:

Your damaged ship sails through wispy clouds. Suddenly you see movement ahead of you. Two red shapes fly out of a cloud, changing direction and speeding up as they move in your direction. You see two red dragons, each with a rider strapped on its back.

2 Adult Pact Dragons (D) **Level 13 Skirmisher**
Large immortal magical beast (dragon, mount) XP 800 each

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +15; darkvision
HP 134; **Bloodied** 67; see also *bloodied breath*
AC 27; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 25
Resist 10 fire, 10 psychic
Speed 7, fly 10 (hover), overland flight 14

Bite (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage; see also *skirmish*.

Aggressive Charger (when mounted by a friendly rider of 13th level or higher; at-will) ✦ **Mount**
When it charges, the pact dragon makes a bite attack in addition to its rider's charge attack.

Breath Weapon (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Fire**
Close blast 5; +15 vs. Reflex; 2d12 + 12 fire damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Bloodied Breath Weapon (free, when first bloodied) ✦ **Fire**
The dragon's *breath weapon* recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.

Astral Jaunt (minor; encounter; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Mount, Teleportation**
The pact dragon disappears into the Astral Sea, teleporting 10 squares. Its rider teleports with it.

Pledged Rider (when mounted by a friendly rider of 13th level or higher; at-will) ✦ **Mount**
Any damage dealt to the pact dragon can be redirected to its rider, and vice versa.

Skirmish +2d6
If, on its turn, the pact dragon ends its move at least 4 squares away from its starting point, it deals 2d6 extra damage with its melee attacks until the start of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech, Draconic, telepathy 20
Skills Endurance +17, Insight +15
Str 24 (+13) **Dex** 20 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+10)
Con 22 (+12) **Int** 15 (+8) **Cha** 16 (+9)

2 Githyanki Lancers (G) **Level 14 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid XP 1,000 each

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +10
HP 134; **Bloodied** 67
AC 28; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; also see *telekinetic tether*

Psychic Lance (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Reach 2; +19 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 psychic damage, and if the githyanki lancer charged, the target is pushed 2 squares.

Silver Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage, and the githyanki lancer or its mount can shift 1 square.

Mindslice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +17 vs. Will; 2d8 + 5 psychic damage.

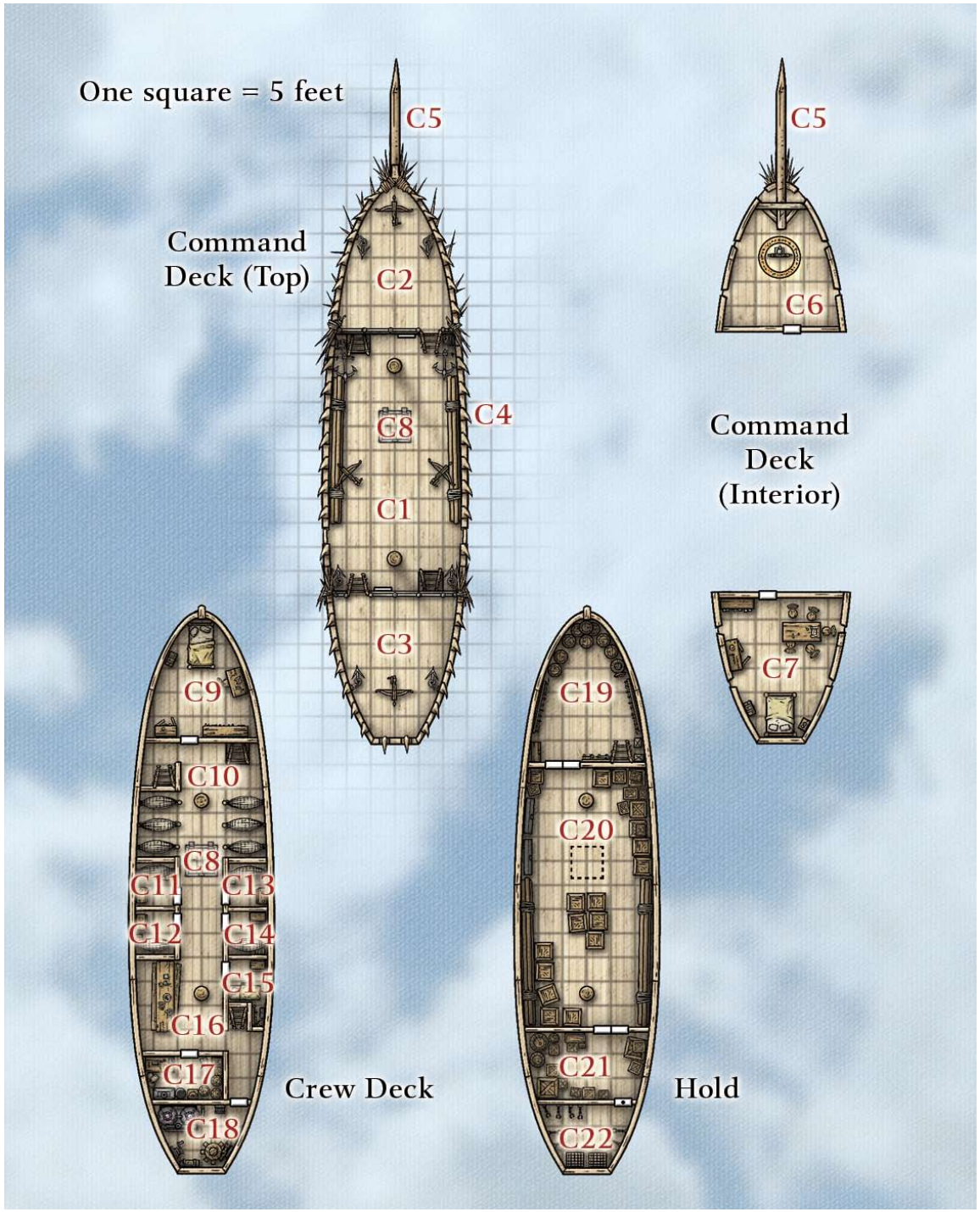
Telekinetic Tether (move or immediate reaction when falling; encounter)
The githyanki lancer can fly up to 10 squares, fly back to its mount's saddle, or fall to the ground without taking falling damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Acrobatics +16
Str 19 (+11) **Dex** 18 (+11) **Wis** 16 (+10)
Con 14 (+9) **Int** 15 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+7)
Equipment scale armor, silver longsword

Tactics

The pact dragons carry the githyanki lancers into battle, soaring over their enemies and charging down like thunderbolts, then teleporting upward so as to charge again in the next round. The dragons fight from the air for 3 rounds or until one of the characters drops (whichever happens first), at which point they land on the deck of the ship for 2 rounds before taking back to the air. They follow this attack routine throughout the battle.

The githyanki lancers use *mindslice* while their mounts are maneuvering. When charging, the lancers use *psychic lance* to try and knock targets off the deck. They do not dismount unless the battle is definitively won.



Features of the Area

Illumination: This encounter takes place in bright sunlight.

Masts: A character standing next to a mast can use it to gain cover.

Crenellations: The *Conqueror*'s railings are equipped with crenellations, giving defenders on the decks of the ship cover against attacks that don't come from higher ground.

Stairs: Stairs to upper decks are difficult terrain to climbing characters, but normal terrain to descending characters.

Ballistas: The squares occupied by ballistas are considered difficult terrain, and characters in those squares can use the siege weapons to gain cover.

The Conqueror: See the description of the ship beginning on page 43 for details on individual areas, if necessary.

A1: Draconic Champion

Encounter Level 12 (3,600 XP)

Setup

Xirakis, pact dragon
Thaggriel, githyanki dragonknight

Thaggriel is a scarred veteran of a dozen wars against the githzerai. He is impatient and overconfident; his commander is keeping him in reserve during the siege of Akma'ad, and he yearns for an actual combat that challenges him. His dragon Xirakis is even more headstrong, looking for any opportunity to attack so long as it doesn't go against the commander's express orders.

Since they are responsible for patrolling and picking off any escaping githzerai, Thaggriel and Xirakis will be soaring over the mountain when the PCs' ship appears. Eager for combat, the two close quickly on the ship to see who controls it. The PCs can open fire with ballistas as soon as Xirakas and Thaggriel come within range, although this causes the pair to maneuver above or below the ship in such a way that they can't easily be attacked.

Read the following aloud:

The red dragon closing on your ship is larger than the two you just fought. There seems to be one githyanki riding it.

Use the map of the *Conqueror* below for this battle.

Xirakis, Adult Pact Dragon — **Level 13 Elite Skirmisher**
Large immortal magical beast (dragon, mount) — XP 1,600

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +15; darkvision
HP 268; **Bloodied** 134; see also *bloodied breath*
AC 29; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 25
Resist 10 fire, 10 psychic
Saving Throws +2
Speed 7, fly 10 (hover), overland flight 14
Action Points 1

Bite (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage; see also *skirmish*.

Claw (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage; see also *skirmish*.

Ripping Charger (when mounted by a friendly rider of 13th level or higher; at-will) ✦ **Mount**
When it charges, Xirakis can make two claw attacks and one bite attack; each must be against a different foe; see also *skirmish*.

Wing Buffet (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves to flank Xirakis)
Targets triggering enemy; +15 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 7 damage, target is knocked prone, and the dragon shifts 2 squares.

Breath Weapon (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Fire**
Close blast 5; +15 vs. Reflex; 3d12 + 12 fire damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Bloodied Breath Weapon (free, when first bloodied) ✦ **Fire**
The dragon's *breath weapon* recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.

Astral Jaunt (minor; encounter; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Mount, Teleportation**
Xirakis disappears into the Astral Sea, teleporting 10 squares. Its rider teleports with it.

Pledged Rider (when mounted by a friendly rider of 13th level or higher; at-will) ✦ **Mount**
Any damage dealt to Xirakis can be redirected to its rider, and vice versa.

Skirmish +2d6
If, on its turn, Xirakis ends its move at least 4 squares away from its starting point, it deals 2d6 extra damage with its melee attacks until the start of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech, Draconic, telepathy 20
Skills Endurance +17, Insight +15
Str 24 (+13) **Dex** 20 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+10)
Con 22 (+12) **Int** 15 (+8) **Cha** 16 (+9)

Thaggriel, Githyanki Dragonknight — **Level 14 Elite Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 2,000

Initiative +16 **Senses** Perception +11
HP 272; **Bloodied** 136
AC 28; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26
Saving Throws +2; +4 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic tether*
Action Points 1

Psychic Lance (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Reach 2; +19 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 psychic damage, and if the githyanki dragonknight charged, the target is pushed 2 squares.

Silver Bastard Sword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+19 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage plus 1d10 psychic damage, and the dragonknight or its mount can shift 2 squares.

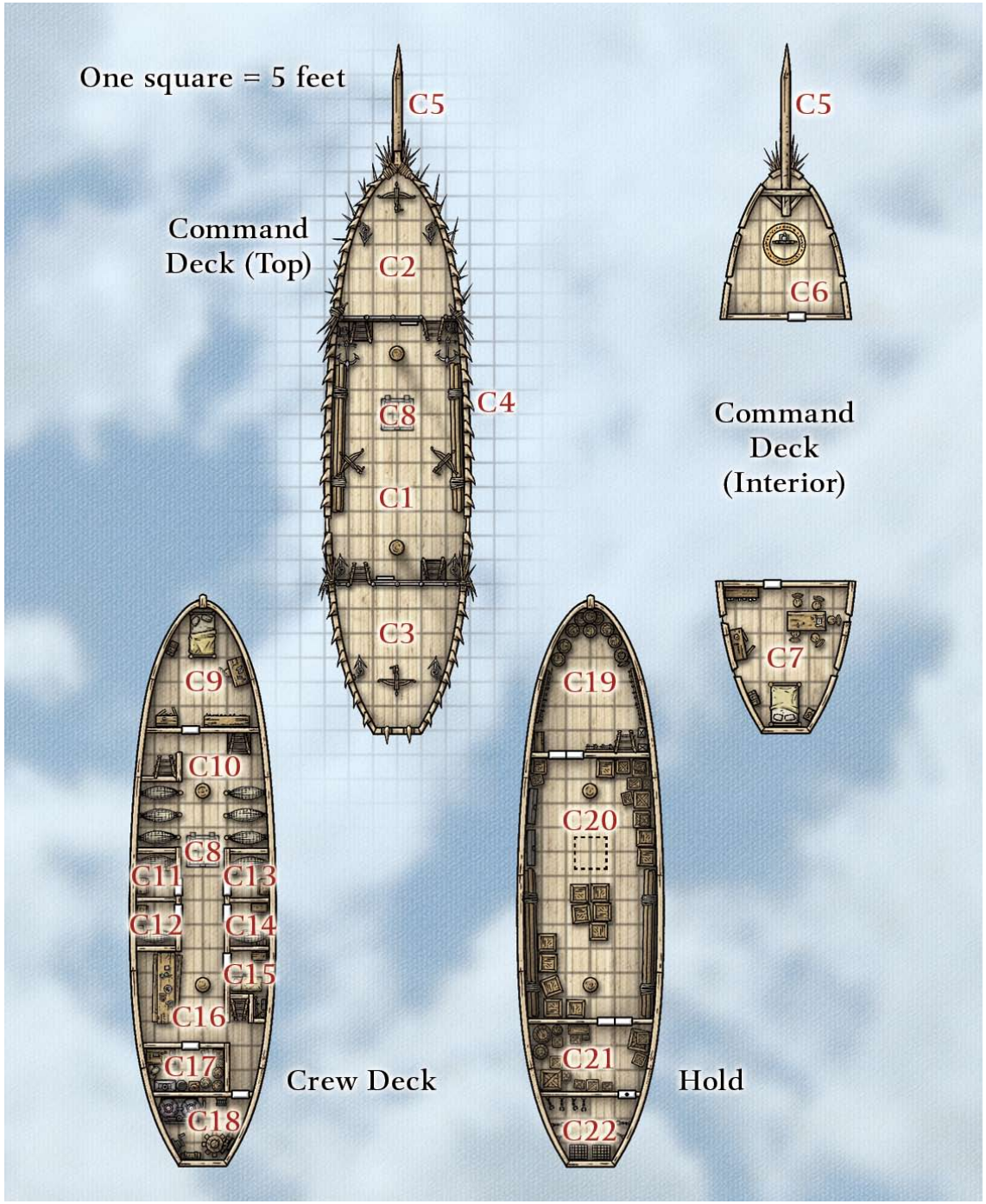
Mindslice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +17 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage.

Knightly Prowess (standard; at-will)
The githyanki dragonknight can make two basic attacks. If the dragonknight charged and made a *psychic lance* attack, the dragonknight or its mount can instead shift 2 squares, then the dragonknight makes a *silver longsword* attack.

Hatred's Juggernaut (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Psychic**
Reach 2; the githyanki dragonknight moves up to it or its mount's speed, making a *psychic lance* against any enemy that comes within reach.

Telekinetic Tether (move or immediate reaction when falling; encounter)
The githyanki dragonknight can fly up to 12 squares, fly back to its mount's saddle, or fall to the ground without taking falling damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Athletics, Acrobatics
Str 21 (+12) **Dex** 20 (+12) **Wis** 18 (+11)
Con 16 (+10) **Int** 16 (+10) **Cha** 14 (+9)
Equipment scale armor, silver longsword, overcoat



Tactics

Thaggriel and Xirakis use the sky to their advantage, moving above and below the ship to avoid exposure to the ballistas. They seldom stop moving, attacking the ship to disable the sails if they can't easily reach and attack a PC. Xirakis tries to charge multiple enemies as often as possible to make maximum effect of *ripping charger*. It even provokes opportunity attacks if necessary to set up another charge. Xirakis uses its *breath weapon* whenever it recharges. Thaggriel uses *knightly prowess* as often as possible to keep Xirakis free of melee to set up another charge.

The two land on the ship only if they believe all accessible foes have been disabled.

Features of the Area

Illumination: This encounter takes place in bright sunlight.

Masts: A character standing next to a mast can use it to gain cover.

Crenellations: The *Conqueror*'s railings are equipped with crenellations, giving defenders on the decks of the ship cover against attacks that don't come from higher ground.

Stairs: Stairs to upper decks are difficult terrain to climbing characters, but normal terrain to descending characters.

Ballistas: The squares occupied by ballistas are considered difficult terrain, and characters in those squares can use the siege weapons to gain cover.

The Conqueror: See the description of the ship beginning on page 43 for details on individual areas, if necessary.

A2: Boarding the Sacrifice

Encounter Level 14 (4,950 XP)

Setup

10 githyanki myrmidons (Y)
2 githyanki mindslicers (M)
Captain Iquel (I)

Whether she comes to the PCs or the PCs come to her, Captain Iquel quickly loads some of her troops and turns her ship to face the PCs as soon as she's aware of them. This takes several minutes, giving the PCs enough time to complete encounter A1. Iquel's ship is identical to the *Conqueror* other than being less damaged. Her helmsman steers the ship while she musters the troops on deck. She attempts to impale the *Conqueror* with the *Sacrifice's* ramming spike before ordering her troops to go swinging and jumping onto the *Conqueror's* deck.

Both the *Sacrifice* and the *Conqueror* have multiple ropes and lines that make it easy for sailors to swing from one vessel to another. Using a rope to swing from one deck to another requires a DC 10 Acrobatics check. Githyanki receive a +5 bonus on these checks due to their training. These ropes also provide a last-minute chance for a falling character to save themselves, granting a +5 bonus to saving throws made to avoid falling to the ground.

Iquel is cautious, particularly if she has seen the PCs destroy Thaggriel and Xirakis. Her primary goal is to make sure that her troops succeed. While she wishes to keep her ship intact, she would rather sacrifice it than let the PCs swing the tide of the battle below.

Read the following aloud:

A ship identical to your own is moving to intercept you. You can see troops moving on its deck.

10 Githyanki Myrmidons (Y) **Level 12 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid XP 175 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion
AC 28; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24
Speed 5

⨁ **Silver Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+19 vs. AC; 7 damage, plus an extra 5 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.

Telekinetic Grasp (standard; encounter)
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 16 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 12 (+7) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 10 (+6)
Equipment chainmail, silver short sword

2 Githyanki Mindslicers (M) **Level 13 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid XP 800 each

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49
AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *telekinetic leap*

⨁ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage.

Mindslice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +16 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage.

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.

Psychic Barrage (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Psychic**
Area burst 1 within 20; +16 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends), and the target can't use daily or encounter powers (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills History +11, Insight +12
Str 14 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 17 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+6)
Equipment robes, overcoat, silver longsword

Iquel, Githyanki Captain (I) **Level 13 Elite Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid XP 1,600

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +10
HP 256; **Bloodied** 128
AC 29; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 25
Saving Throws +2, +4 against charm effects
Speed 5; also see *astral engagement* and *telekinetic leap*
Action Points 1

⨁ **Silver Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage plus 1d10 psychic damage, plus an extra 2d10 psychic damage against an immobilized target.

Mindhook (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +17 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage, and the githyanki captain or an ally of the captain's choice marks the target (save ends).

Double Attack (standard; at-will)
The githyanki captain makes two basic attacks.

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki captain or an ally within range can fly up to 8 squares.

Psychic Upheaval (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ✦ **Psychic**
Close burst 3; targets enemies; +16 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 4 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). Allies within the area gain 10 temporary hit points.

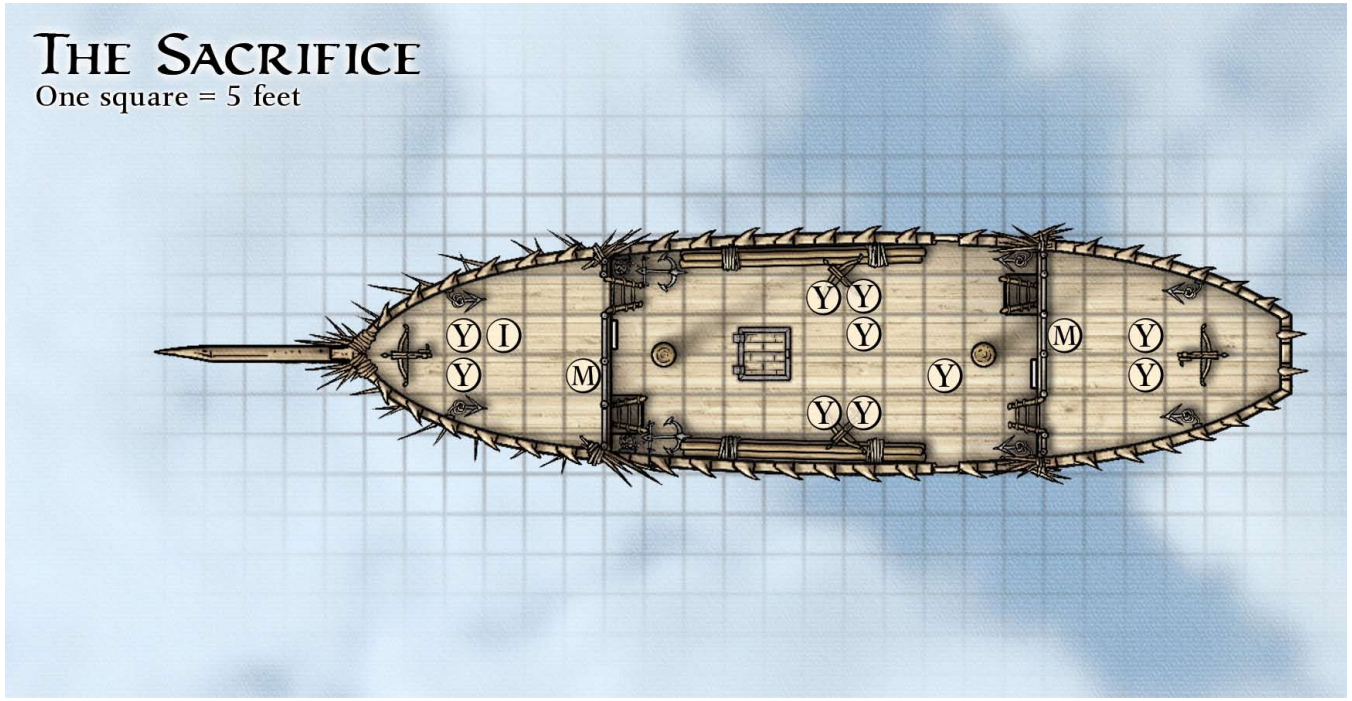
Astral Engagement (move; recharge ⚄ ⚅ ⚅) ✦ **Teleportation**
The captain teleports 6 squares to a square adjacent to an enemy, and one ally within 5 squares of the captain's start or end point can charge the same enemy.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills: Arcana +15, History +17
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 12 (+7) **Wis** 19 (+10)
Con 16 (+9) **Int** 18 (+10) **Cha** 16 (+9)
Equipment: plate armor, silver greatsword, Bitter Glass communication device

Tactics

Myrmidons are culled from the mass of githyanki troops—lesser warriors who are trained to surge toward enemies in battle. They work in tandem and have good communication. Half the myrmidons use *telekinetic grasp* on the first round of combat while the other half attacks targets immobilized by their peers. The second round of combat allows the shock troopers to switch roles, the rear lines moving forward to attack newly immobilized foes.

Captain Iquel is a commander who prides herself on her organization and tactics. She is angry that several mistakes have been made during the course of the battle, and is desperate for success so that she is not punished upon her return. Once the ships are locked together, she swings across to the *Conqueror* at the beginning of round 3. She stands proudly with her troops, protecting the mindslicers as long as possible. She uses *psychic upheaval* as soon as she can catch at least two targets in the burst, and tries to focus her melee attacks against more lightly armored foes if possible. She directs her myrmidons to concentrate their attacks on single targets as much as possible.



Features of the Area

Illumination: This encounter takes place in bright sunlight.

Masts: A character standing next to a mast can use it to gain cover.

Crenellations: The *Conqueror*'s railings are equipped with crenellations, giving defenders on the decks of the ship cover against attacks that don't come from higher ground.

Stairs: Stairs to upper decks are difficult terrain to climbing characters, but normal terrain to descending characters.

Ballistas: The squares occupied by ballistas are considered difficult terrain, and characters in those squares can use the siege weapons to gain cover.

Development

Regardless of the outcome of any ramming attempts, the *Sacrifice* takes enough damage in this fight that it is no longer airworthy, making it unsuitable if the PCs want to use it to fly to Sayre.

Captain Iquel carries a communication device almost identical in size and shape to the one carried by the githzerai Gallia, although hers is dark blue, rather than green.

The Conqueror: See the description of the ship beginning on page 43 for details on individual areas, if necessary.

A3: Falling Rock

Encounter Level 14 (4,900 XP)

Setup

4 githyanki mindslicers (M)
2 githyanki warriors (W)
2 githyanki myrmidons (Y)

The sloping cliff overlooking the fortress of Akma'ad was turned into a defensive death trap by githzerai. Hundreds of tons of rock and debris were piled and balanced, held in place by heavy chains and two stout guard towers. The intent was that if an army ever threatened Akma'ad, the githzerai could release the chain and drop a massive landslide on top of the heads of the attacking army.

This would have worked perfectly had the githyanki not first scouted the area. Before the main attack occurred, the githzerai in the guard towers were quietly slain and the towers were seized by a githyanki strike force. Now the force is split between the two towers, forbidden to take part in the battle below. They are bored and frustrated that they've been relegated to a simple guard duty, to the extent that several of them are loitering on the edge of the cliff, looking down at the fighting below.

In order to release the landslide, the PCs must pull two large levers inside either guard tower. Pulling each lever is a standard action. This releases the chains and starts the lethal landslide. After the landslide has fallen, visibility on the battlefield of Akma'ad is reduced to 2 squares due to dust until the end of the encounter.

Read the following aloud:

From your ship, it's clear that two squat guard towers perch on top of this steep cliff. Chains are stretched between them, holding back what must be hundreds of tons of rock and rubble. You can see a dead githzerai on the ground, and several githyanki guarding the towers.

4 Githyanki Mindslicers (M) **Level 13 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid XP 800 each

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49
AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *telekinetic leap*

⊕ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage.

Mindslice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +16 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage.

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.

Psychic Barrage (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Psychic**
Area burst 1 within 20; +16 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends), and the target can't use daily or encounter powers (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills History +11, Insight +12
Str 14 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 17 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+6)
Equipment robes, overcoat, silver longsword

Tactics

Once alerted, these githyanki form up into two well-organized groups, one for each tower. If one tower is under attack, reinforcements are sent from the other tower, always leaving behind at least one githyanki. These githyanki give their lives to make sure that the landslide is not dropped.

Once engaged in melee, the warriors and shock troopers concentrate on immobilized foes, while the mindslicers work in tandem to remove enemy artillery.

2 Githyanki Warriors (W) **Level 12 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid XP 700 each

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 118; **Bloodied** 59
AC 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic leap*

⊕ **Silver Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage plus 1d6 psychic damage, plus an extra 3d6 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.

Telekinetic Grasp (standard; sustain minor; encounter)
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills History +9, Insight +12
Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 17 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+7)
Equipment plate armor, silver greatsword

2 Githyanki Myrmidons (Y) **Level 12 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid XP 175 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion
AC 28; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24
Speed 5

⊕ **Silver Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+19 vs. AC; 7 damage, plus an extra 5 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.

Telekinetic Grasp (standard; encounter)
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 16 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 12 (+7) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 10 (+6)
Equipment chainmail, silver short sword

Features of the Area

Illumination: This encounter takes place in bright sunlight.

Buildings: Two low, squat towers flank the rubble. Both have had their doors broken open when the githyanki seized control of the area, and so are no longer useful for defense. Each tower is fairly barren and spare, dominated by two thick wooden levers that control the landslide winch.

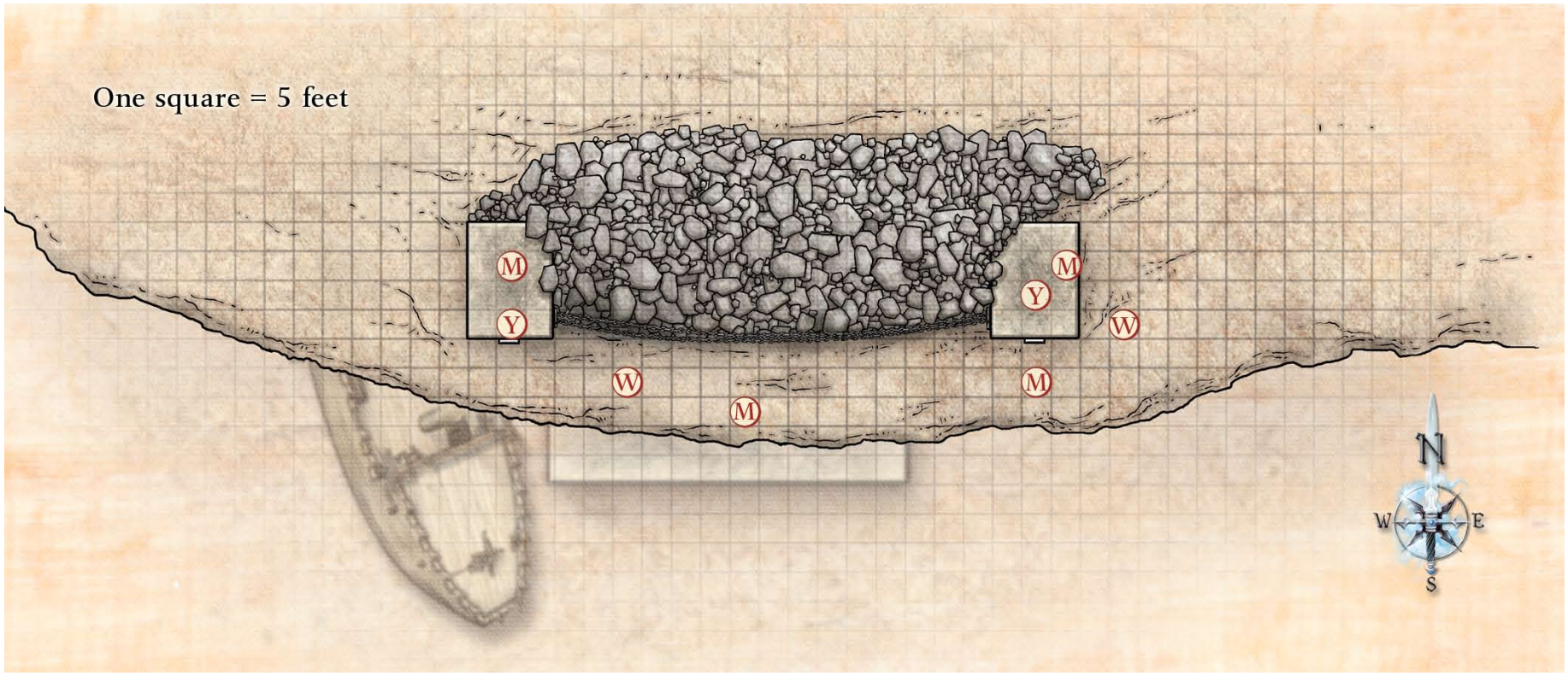
Rock Pile: A character can move onto the piled rocks from either tower. The boulders and rocks comprise difficult terrain.

Development

If the characters successfully defeat the githyanki here, one character in each tower can pull the massive wooden levers to trigger the landslide. If this happens, **read the following**:

With a tremendous, deafening roar, a cascade of rock—from pebbles the size of a pea to boulders the size of a mule—tumbles down onto the githyanki army massed outside the walls of Akma'ad. At first, all you see is a blinding cloud of dust, but as the wind clears it from the field, you see that hundreds of githyanki troops have been pulverized by the rock, and the rest are scattered or fleeing outright.

Triggering the landslide effectively destroys enough of the githyanki ground forces that further siege is almost impossible. Combined with the destruction of the githyanki air forces (see encounters A1 and A2) or the squads penetrating the walls (encounters A4 and A5), this almost certainly guarantees victory.



A4: Side Entrance

Encounter Level 14 (5,000 XP)

Setup

Githyanki mindslicer (M)
4 githyanki warriors (W)
8 githyanki myrmidons (Y)
3 githzerai cenobites (C)

This encounter occurs whether or not the landslide from encounter A3: Falling Rock has been dropped. If it has, this group is a band of githyanki that survived the landslide trying to penetrate the fortress. If not, this is a strike force attempting to use a ritual to gain entrance. This small band of githyanki are led by a specially trained mindslicer in the midst of a Passwall ritual.

If the ritual is completed, all nearby githyanki storm the opening. While the ritual is performed, the githyanki crouch in the area between a downed githyanki ship and the wall, hoping they won't be attacked until the ritual is complete.

Read the following:

Over the shouts and sounds of fighting, you hear the sound of chanting. Protected from githzerai attack by the side of the crashed ship and the angle of the walls, a small group of githyanki appears to be performing some sort of ritual next to the walls. Shock troopers guard the group.

Tactics

The mindslicer focuses on the ritual until attacked. She will complete the ritual within 7 rounds or unless she's interrupted. Any successful attack that deals damage to the mindslicer disrupts the ritual. The warriors and myrmidons do their best to stop the PCs from interfering, leading the battle away from the mindslicer as much as possible.

The githzerai cenobites only come into play if the ritual is completed. If that happens, they fight from the gap, attacking only those enemies who step within reach.

Githyanki Mindslicer (M) **Level 13 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid XP 800

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49
AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *telekinetic leap*

Silver Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage.

Mindslice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +16 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage.

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.

Psychic Barrage (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Psychic**
Area burst 1 within 20; +16 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends), and the target can't use daily or encounter powers (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills History +11, Insight +12
Str 14 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 17 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+6)
Equipment robes, overcoat, silver longsword

Features of the Area

Illumination: This encounter takes place in bright sunlight unless the landslide from encounter A3 has been dropped. In that case, dust reduces visibility to 2 squares.

Buildings: The ritual is taking pace between the walls of Akma'ad and a crashed githyanki ship. Climbing the walls requires a DC 16 Athletics check.

Rubble: If the landslide from encounter A3 has been triggered, this entire area is full of rubble, making each square except those on the canted deck of the ship difficult terrain.

8 Githyanki Myrmidons (Y) **Level 12 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid XP 175 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion
AC 28; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24
Speed 5

Silver Short Sword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+19 vs. AC; 7 damage, plus an extra 5 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.

Telekinetic Grasp (standard; encounter)
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 16 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 12 (+7) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 10 (+6)
Equipment chainmail, silver short sword

4 Githyanki Warriors (W) **Level 12 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid XP 700 each

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 118; **Bloodied** 59
AC 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic leap*

Silver Greatsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage plus 1d6 psychic damage, plus an extra 3d6 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.

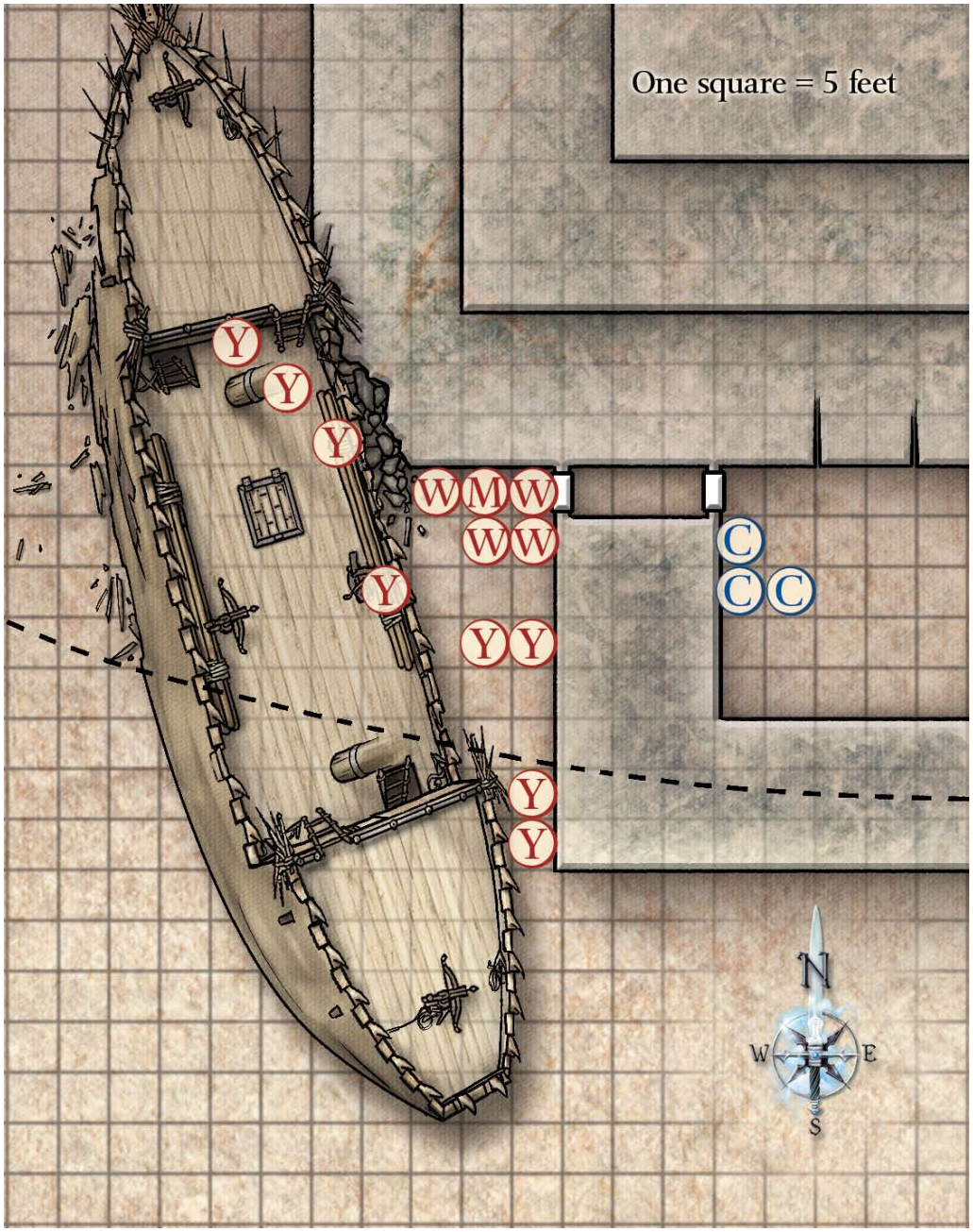
Telekinetic Grasp (standard; sustain minor; encounter)
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills History +9, Insight +12
Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 17 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+7)
Equipment plate armor, silver greatsword

Crashed Ship: The crashed ship is leaning against the walls of the fortress at a fairly steep angle. Any character making a melee attack on the deck of the ship must first make a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check or take a -2 penalty to the attack roll.

Githzerai Cenobite	**Level 11 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 600
Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +13	
HP 108; **Bloodied** 54	
AC 27; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 23; see also *iron mind*	
Speed 7; see also *inescapable fate*	
⊕ **Unarmed Strike** (standard; at-will)	
+17 vs. AC; 2d8 + 3 damage.	
⸸ **Stunning Strike** (standard; at-will)	
+14 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the githzerai cenobite's next turn.	
Inescapable Fate (immediate reaction, when an adjacent enemy shifts away from the githzerai cenobite; at-will)	
The cenobite shifts to remain adjacent to the enemy. The cenobite cannot use this power if the enemy shifts using a movement mode the cenobite does not possess.	
Iron Mind (immediate interrupt, when the githzerai cenobite would be hit by an attack; encounter)	
The githzerai cenobite gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of its next turn.	
Trace Chance (standard; recharge)	
Ranged 5; no attack roll required; the next melee attack made against the target gains a +5 power bonus to the attack roll and, if it hits, it is automatically a critical hit.	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Deep Speech	
Skills Acrobatics +15, Athletics +9, Insight +13	
Str 15 (+7) **Dex** 17 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+8)	
Con 12 (+6) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 11 (+5)	



A5: Wall Breach

Encounter Level 14 (4,550 XP)

Setup

4 githyanki warriors (W)
10 githyanki myrmidons (Y)
10 githzerai cenobites (C)

The githyanki have breached the wall on the east side of the tower. Githzerai are trying to prevent their entry, but are being pushed backward and will fall unless the PCs intervene.

Read the following aloud:

Surviving githyanki have managed to break through a wall on the east side of the fortress. Githzerai defenders are trying to hold them back, but one falls even as you're watching.

4 Githyanki Warriors (W)	**Level 12 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 700 each
Initiative +13	**Senses** Perception +12
HP 118; **Bloodied** 59	
AC 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22	
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects	
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic leap*	
ⓘ **Silver Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage plus 1d6 psychic damage, plus an extra 3d6 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.	
⚚ **Telekinetic Grasp** (standard; sustain minor; encounter)	
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).	
⚚ **Telekinetic Leap** (move; encounter)	
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills History +9, Insight +12	
Str 21 (+11)	**Dex** 17 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8)	**Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+7)
Equipment plate armor, silver greatsword	

10 Githyanki Myrmidons (Y)	**Level 12 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 175 each
Initiative +12	**Senses** Perception +9
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	
AC 28; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24	
Speed 5	
ⓘ **Silver Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+19 vs. AC; 7 damage, plus an extra 5 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.	
⚚ **Telekinetic Grasp** (standard; encounter)	
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).	
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 16 (+9)	**Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 12 (+7)	**Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 10 (+6)
Equipment chainmail, silver short sword	

Tactics

This combat should be described as a brutal back-and-forth between the githzerai and the githyanki. The githyanki are trying to establish a beachhead within the fortress. To do so, they are concentrating their attacks on a handful of githzerai every round, taking them down before they move on to the next targets. If the warriors are slain, the remaining shock troopers become much less organized. Two cenobites fall each round. All the githzerai are badly injured, while the githyanki are relatively fresh thanks to their superior numbers.

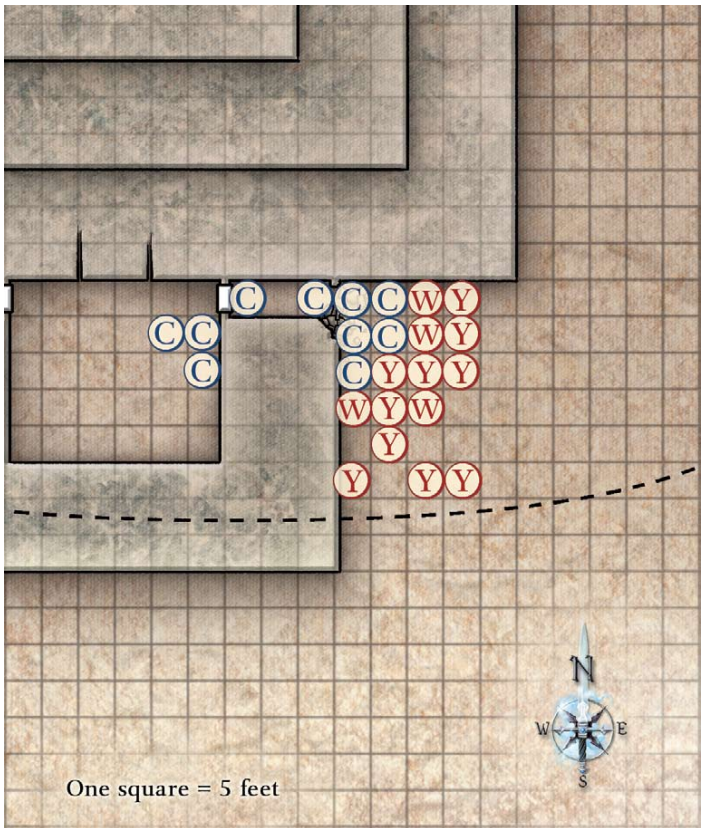
Similar to encounter A4, the cenobites don't play much of a factor here. Assume that as a unit, they deal 10 points of damage to a nearby warrior at the end of each round. If you'd like them to play a more substantial role in the encounter, refer to the statistics on page 83.

Features of the Area

Illumination: This encounter takes place in bright sunlight unless landslide from encounter A3 has been dropped. In that case, dust reduces visibility to 2 squares.

Buildings: The wall of Akma'ad rises 30 feet at this point. One of the massive doors has been destroyed.

Rubble: This area is littered with dead bodies. If the landslide from encounter A3 has been triggered, it is also covered with rubble, making every square difficult terrain.



Negotiating with Odos

Roleplaying Encounter
Encounter Level 13

Running this Encounter

The adventurers have the potential to interact with Odos and both earn his trust and gain some valuable information in the process. As stated on page 48, the githzerai leader is not especially forthcoming. Odos can reveal much about the strength of his character. You should feel free to communicate to the players that he cares a great deal about his people, and that only his tremendous inner strength is keeping him from total despair.

While running this encounter, each piece of information Odos has to share is associated with a skill, a DC, and sometimes another, related condition. This encounter is not a skill challenge. Feel free to award the characters the pieces of information (or not) based solely on how they roleplay this encounter and the questions they ask. Alternatively, feel free to require the recommended skill checks, providing bonuses as indicated depending on the PCs' behavior. The skills, DCs, and possible bonuses are simply tools to guide the encounter.

Check Modifiers

The adventurers gain bonuses while speaking with Odos by mentioning their exploits against the githyanki or impressing the githzerai leader with their sincere desire to help. The following examples grant the heroes the indicated bonus on skill checks made during this roleplaying encounter with Odos.

Event	Bonus
The characters uncover and prove that Gallia is possessed by a githyanki spy	+1
The characters mention that they were responsible for the defeat of General Zithiruun	+1
The characters mention the defeat of githyanki working for Sarshan	+1
The characters make an offer to escort Odos and his survivors to Sayre	+1

What Odos Knows

Odos can tell the adventurers several pieces of important information. Feel free to reward good roleplaying without requiring a skill check if you'd like.

Insight (DC 21): *Odos is concerned greatly about his people and their future. He worries that Sayre is only a temporary solution, and doesn't know if there's anyone he or the githzerai can trust other than themselves. Odos is a good and just leader, and his taciturn nature is a reflection of the hardships his race has endured, exacerbated by the recent attacks.*

Diplomacy (DC 23): *The githyanki attacked without warning, and they sent strike teams to the personal chambers of all the githzerai leaders, as if they knew exactly who to attack and where they were staying. He's convinced someone fed them information on the layout of Akma'ad, as well as the names of the leaders present. He was spared only because he stepped outside for a walk and heard the team of assassins in his room on his way back. He surprised the squad of three and defeated them single-handedly.*

Insight (DC 18): *Attacks of this sort have been happening to githzerai enclaves and monasteries all over the mortal realm. Most have fled to a refuge in Sayre, a nearby city. Odos wants to take his people there now.*

Perception (DC 23): *One of the githyanki assassins in his room had a small device that could be held in her hand. She was speaking into this object when he surprised the assassins in his room. It was green and looked reflective. If the characters have already revealed Gallia as a spy, Odos can identify the device she carries as identical to the one used by the githyanki who tried to assassinate him. If Gallia has not yet been identified as a spy, a character who makes a successful DC23 Insight check when Odos reveals this information notices Gallia pay special attention and attempt to feign indifference. The githyanki possessing her wants to make sure none of these devices falls into the hands of their enemies.*

Diplomacy (DC 21): *(only available after one other success). Odos and the other githzerai had planned this meeting at Akma'ad to discuss whether or not to accept an invitation in Sayre to meet with a newly formed coalition of leaders from other regions of the world concerned with the extent of the githyanki invasion. Each comes from a homeland ravaged by the githyanki, and they're all looking for aid and support from their regions. Odos is bitter that the "humans" (he has a tendency to call all non-githzerai and non-githyanki "humans") sound divided over political issues when there's so much at stake. He was against going to the meeting, but now feels that going to Sayre is the only choice for his people.*

Development

As a result of this interaction, the characters should want to escort the githzerai to Sayre. The adventurers should also, hopefully, view Odos as an important ally. He's the last surviving githzerai elder on the mortal realm, and so all the githzerai of this world follow his lead in the coming negotiations and conflicts.

S1: Ambush

Encounter Level 12 (3,800 XP)

Setup

Brann'ot, githyanki gish (B)
2 githyanki warriors (W)

This ambush can occur at any point during the trip to Sayre, but is most likely to occur at night. Brann'ot is a gish assassin who singlehandedly slew several of the githzerai leaders at the beginning of the battle. Hounded through the fortress by furious githzerai guards who eventually discovered him, he was forced to retreat from injuries before the PCs arrived.

Alongside two githyanki warriors he ran across, he now shadows the retreating githzerai through the wilderness. Brann'ot is looking for his opportunity to assassinate Odos and eliminate the troublesome adventurers.

2 Githyanki Warriors (W)	Level 12 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 700 each
Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +12	
HP 118; **Bloodied** 59	
AC 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22	
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects	
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic leap*	
⨁ **Silver Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage plus 1d6 psychic damage, plus an extra 3d6 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.	
⤙ **Telekinetic Grasp** (standard; sustain minor; encounter)	
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).	
⤙ **Telekinetic Leap** (move; encounter)	
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech	
Skills History +9, Insight +12	
Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 17 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)	
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+7)	
Equipment plate armor, silver greatsword	

Read the folliowing aloud:

The githzerai camp is quiet tonight. Even the wounded seem to have found some peace in the wilderness. Suddenly, the peace is shattered as a githyanki emerges straight out of the ground at your feet, a silvery longsword poised to strike.

Tactics

Brann'ot tries to catch one or two PCs alone on one of the lower decks of the ship, if the assault happens aboard the *Conqueror*. If on land, Brann'ot waits until nightfall to strike, hoping to catch one or more of the PCs away from the githzerai and other allies. Brann'ot attacks and then flees a short distance, hoping to draw the PCs into an ambush set by his allies (the githyanki warriors).

Brann'ot darts in and out of combat, using *astral stride* to move through otherwise impassable obstacles, and mixing *double attacks* with *force bolts*. The warriors use *telekinetic grasp* to slow the approach of the PCs in the first two rounds, taking advantage of an immobilized foe if possible with their *silver greatswords*.

If the fight lasts for more than 5 rounds, allow Odos a DC 28 Perception check (his bonus is +20) to hear the combat. If successful, he comes running, arriving 2 rounds later at the beginning of round 7. Odos can make the same check at the beginning of each round until he hears the battle or the fight is over. Other githzerai aren't aware of the battle. If the characters sound a general alarm, it still takes Odos until round 5 to react as he calms his people. For their part, the exhausted githzerai form up defensively around their numerous wounded, and wait for an enemy to show itself.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Brann'ot attacks in the dim light of twilight or early dawn, when most all the exhausted travelers have fallen asleep.

Rough Ground: Assume that if the PCs aren't aboard an airship, the site of the ambush Brann'ot tries to draw the PCs into is riddled with areas of difficult terrain at inopportune places. He wants to limit the characters' mobility while capitalizing on his own.

Brann'ot, Githyanki Gish (B)	Level 15 Elite Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 2,400
Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +14	
HP 226; **Bloodied** 113	
AC 31; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 29	
Saving Throws +2 (+4 vs charm effects)	
Speed 5; see also *astral stride*	
Action Points 1	
⨁ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+20 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage.	
⨁ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
The githyanki gish makes two silver longsword attacks.	
⤙ **Force Bolt** (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Force**	
Ranged 10; +18 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 4 force damage.	
⤙ **Storm of Stars** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Fire**	
The githyanki gish makes four attacks, no more than two of them against a single target: ranged 5; +20 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 fire damage.	
Astral Stride (move; at-will) ✦ **Teleportation**	
The githyanki gish teleports 6 squares and gains the insubstantial and phasing qualities until the start of its next turn.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Draconic	
Skills Arcana +16, History +13, Insight +14	
Str 16 (+10) **Dex** 14 (+9) **Wis** 14 (+9)	
Con 17 (+10) **Int** 19 (+11) **Cha** 17 (+10)	
Equipment chainmail, silver longsword	

Reconnecting with Amyria

Roleplaying Encounter
Encounter Level 12

Encounter Details

The PCs might be surprised and pleased to see Amyria, whom they haven't seen since they parted from her in Overlook. Amyria is overjoyed to see the characters. In this encounter, establish the strength of Amyria's character, her resolve to save the region from the githyanki attacks, and her commitment and faith in the characters. Amyria is suspicious of a great deal. She knows of the githyanki's ability to possess people and use them as puppets and spies. But she trusts the PCs implicitly for reasons she can't quite communicate. She is clearly eager to see them again and share her knowledge. That said, the deva is tired and worried, and seems to be carrying a great burden on her shoulders.

In this encounter, the adventurers have the opportunity to reconnect with Amyria and gain some information in the process. There are no skill checks in this encounter. Amyria's purpose in this encounter is to strengthen her bond with the adventurers and secure them as allies in the tests to come. She does not dismiss the three githzerai leaders when she speaks with the characters. If the PCs ask Aziff, Gal'ott, and Odos to leave, Amyria will ask that they be allowed to hear what she has to say. Only if the characters insist will she grudgingly ask the other NPCs to be sent away.

What Amyria Knows

- She has spent a great deal of time in the weeks since she parted with the adventurers traveling outside Elsir Vale, seeking out the extent of the githyanki invasion. In the process, she has established connections in most of the cities nearby. She has also learned that githyanki attacks have come at the worst times for the defenses of every region. Only Elsir Vale has been spared—at least thus far—thanks to the PCs' actions in defeating General Zithiruun. She knows it is only a matter of time until the githyanki try again.
- Amyria has an agent in the household of Lord Torrance and is suspicious of his connection (as well as that of other prominent citizens) to Lord Telicanthus. The githyanki, whom she went out of her way to meet at a social event the week before, seems genuine, but a githyanki operating so openly just seems wrong to Amyria. A DC 18 Insight check also reveals that Amyria is ashamed of her feelings about Telicanthus. She wants to believe that not all githyanki are evil ravagers intent on conquest, but she is suspicious nonetheless. She is too quick to deflect questions about Telicanthus, his motives, and his possible operations. Her own self doubt gets in the way of her instincts about the githyanki, which is why she cautions the githzerai of acting too hastily.
- Amyria learned that two leaders in other nearby cities are seeking out allies. She feels that forming a more concrete alliance—she calls this group the Coalition—between all the besieged communities, city-states, and regions will help them all, so she has been spending a great deal of time fostering this idea. She has been marginally successful in putting together the war council, which holds its first meeting in Sayre in the morning. But Amyria herself has little more than a voice in the proceedings. She has no home community and represents only herself and her god, Bahamut. She is being allowed in the proceedings because she organized the event and chose Sayre as the site of the meeting. She can tell the adventurers the names of the members of the Coalition (see page 63 for their descriptions).
- Amyria chose for the council to meet in Sayre because, like Odos, who grunts and nods when she mentions this, she suspects that the githyanki have some means of communication that surpasses any sort of magic that she is aware of. They seem able to react almost instantaneously to threats that marshal to meet them, and they strike when their enemies are at their most vulnerable. Only regions such as Elsir Vale (on a state of perpetual heightened alert), are having luck defending against the attacks. She also tells the PCs that she tried to get to the island nation of Nefelus, off the distant coast, but there's some sort of blockade preventing any ships from sailing there. The knowledge of magic possessed by the sages of Nefelus is said to be nearly unsurpassed, but the University of Sayre is a worthy rival. She hopes to convince the war council that they should ask the scholars of the university to turn all their efforts toward uncovering the nature of the githyanki's communication network.
- Finally, Amyria has one other reason for coming to Sayre. She had a dream recently that had the weight of significance behind it. She won't use words like "prophetic," but when she recounts the dream, her eyes grow distant and her voice soft as she relates what she saw.

If the PCs ask Amyria about her dream, read the following aloud.

"In my dream I was standing in the midst of raw elements. Waves crashed around me and fires flared, and I was looking down through clouds onto a dark blue night's sky. Stretching across the sky was a giant spider's web that was woven between planes. It was silver and sparkled with stars, and at the end of each web line was a githyanki. As each githyanki spoke, the web sparkled, and a fat spider in the middle listened to everything that anyone said. The spider was beautiful, but you could tell it was evil, just like the people talking through it. It scuttled around, fixing frayed lines and tossing out new lines to new people. Most were githyanki, but some were not. One of the lines went to a githzerai." She looks troubled.

"I looked harder at the spider, and I knew it was here in Sayre. I could see the city around it. So I came here. I think someone in Sayre is helping the githyanki, but we don't know for sure who it is, although we have our suspicions. And we don't have an easy answer about what to do about it."

If the three githzerai leaders are still present, Gal'ott speaks up:

"Of course we do. We find your spider. We find him and kill him. We kill him and return to our homes."

To which Amyria replies:

"You think that's going to solve the problem, Gal'ott? We know of whom you speak. And he's politically connected to everyone who could help the githzerai! Kill him and get executed as murderers and traitors. I say we need to prove what he's up to, and then discredit him. It's the only way to help the githzerai."

At this point, the PCs can step in and help Amyria persuade the brash githzerai to show some restraint with a successful DC 21 Diplomacy or Intimidate check. If successful, Gal'ott bows his head and says:

"I will comply with the majority. For one week. After that time, my people will take matters into their own hands."

He then stands, nods to Odos and Azitt, and leaves.

Failure, however, results in Gal'ott standing suddenly, sending his chair toppling to the floor. His voice shaking, he says:

"You want to help us? You aren't even of our race! The guards here treat us as thieves, and even the beggars attack us! This is no fit place for a githzerai. We should abandon this plane and leave the humans to their fate. We'll simply clean up when they're done."

Allow good roleplaying to influence this interaction with Amyria and the githzerai. If one or more players are particularly eloquent or sound convincing in their promises to do what they can to aid the githzerai, you might consider foregoing skill checks entirely.

Development

The rest of the githzerai excuse themselves shortly after Gal'ott leaves to speak with their people. When gone, Amyria also stands to leave and rest. She thanks the characters, but makes it clear to the PCs that there is a divide in the githzerai community, and that she has been unable to heal the rift. She asks for their continued help in convincing Odos that the githzerai should stay in Sayre long enough to solve the riddle of her dream, and that they should expose Telicanthus publicly instead of murdering him without proof. She also plans to introduce Odos as a member of her Coalition, and she asks the PCs to attend the meeting as her guests. She makes it clear to them that she will be able to speak and hopefully influence the events of the meeting, but that she will not have a vote.

Amyria **Level 13 Elite Soldier (Leader)**
Medium immortal humanoid, deva XP 1,600

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +13
Aura of Recovery aura 2; allies that start their turn in Amyria's aura gain a +1 bonus to all saves until the start of their next turn.
HP 254; **Bloodied** 127
Resist necrotic 11, radiant 11
AC 29; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 28; +1 to all defenses against bloodied enemies
Saving Throws +2
Speed 8
Action Points 1

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Radiant, Weapon**
+20 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of Amyria's next turn. While so marked, if the target doesn't attack Amyria, the target takes 7 radiant damage.

⸸ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Radiant, Weapon**
Amyria makes two longsword attacks.

⸸ **Crusader's Assault** (standard; requires longsword; at-will) ✦ **Radiant, Weapon**
+20 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage plus 1d8 radiant damage, and one of Amyria's allies within 10 squares can make a basic attack as a free action against the same target.

➢ **Bahamut's Accusing Eye** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Cold, Radiant**
Ranged 10; +18 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 7 cold and radiant damage, and ongoing 5 cold and radiant damage and the target is slowed (save ends both).

Memory of a Thousand Lifetimes (free, when the Amyria makes an attack roll, a skill check, or an ability check and dislikes the result; encounter)
Amyria adds 1d6 to the triggering roll.

Alignment Lawful good **Languages** Common, Draconic, Supernal
Skills Diplomacy +14, Religion +17

Str 11 (+6)	**Dex** 13 (+7)	**Wis** 24 (+13)
Con 15 (+8)	**Int** 19 (+10)	**Cha** 17 (+9)

SC1: The Debate

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

Setup

Amyria, Gal'ott, Azitt, Chend, and even Gallia (if she is still around) will chime in with their opinions and their own arguments for or against what the PCs are saying. Refer to the descriptions of these NPCs and familiarize yourself with their personalities and motivations before beginning the skill challenge. The goal for the PCs here is to convince Odos to come to the Coalition meeting and to not order an assassination attempt on Telicanthus.

The Debate **Level 13**
Skill Challenge XP 4,000

"I see no reason why the githzerai should not just leave the mortals to their own devices, and perhaps attack the githyanki once they are weakened from your conquest. I fail to see how you can convince me otherwise, but I am willing to listen to arguments."

Complexity
3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills
Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Insight, Intimidation, Religion, Streetwise

Victory
The party convinces Odos to investigate Telicanthus instead of just leaving the mortal plane after having him assassinated.

Defeat
The party is unable to convince Odos to change his opinion. He makes plans to leave, and gives instructions to his subordinates that Telicanthus should be slain whether he is guilty or not.

Bluff
DC 22 A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.
The PC paints a vivid picture of the hatred toward githzerai that might occur if Telicanthus is assassinated, or how important the githzerai are to the war cause, using just the right amount of exaggeration.

Diplomacy
DC 22 A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.
The PC stresses how much stronger every realm will be if they stand united against the githyanki threat.

History
DC 26 A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.
Recalling the details of past warfare between the githyanki and githzerai, the PC inflames Odos's anger and reminds him how important it is to stop his ancient foe. History can also be used to remind Odos how laws tend to punish the guilty, and that Telicanthus will likely be publicly humiliated if exposed.

Insight
DC 22 A success on this check does not count as a success on the skill challenge, but does grant a +2 bonus on any other skill checks made in the same round. Failure imposes a –2 penalty on any other skill rolls in the same round. Only one insight check can be attempted per round.
Noticing the listeners' subtle reactions, the group tailors their responses to be more convincing.

Intimidation
DC 26 A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.
It is difficult to intimidate Odos, but he might be impressed by the PC's strength and commitment as he tries to convert others to the cause of the war.

Religion
DC 22 A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.
The PC describes how a githyanki victory could spell doom for the githzerai's introspective path of enlightenment, and quotes passages that mention bringing order out of chaos.

Streetwise
DC 22 A successful check counts as a success on the skill challenge.
The PC reminds Odos that murdering a beloved figure often causes great hatred and racism against the murderers, and would paint a false image of the githzerai.

Development

If the PCs succeed in convincing Odos, he quiets the fractious githzerai and unites them behind his will. He agrees to accompany the PCs to meet Amyria's Coalition, and the PCs gain a +2 bonus to all checks that target Odos during The Coalition skill challenge (see page 100). Odos decides that Telicanthus should be investigated before taking more extreme measures.

In the interim, Odos wants to know how Telicanthus is connected to this web that Amyria foresaw. He asks if any of the PCs know how to cast the ritual Consult Mystic Sages.

If so, Odos asks them to perform the ritual to find out how Telicanthus is connected to Amyria's dream. If none of the PCs currently possesses the ritual, Odos gives them a ritual scroll and asks them to use it. If none of the PCs possesses the Ritual Casting feat, Odos orders Chend to do so. The ritual results in a brief verse instead of a simple answer.

Read the writing on the wall
You are not far from a place where knowledge turns to greed
Beneath the spice house lurks the profane
And knowledge lies trapped behind the guardian

Odos asks the PCs to investigate. A DC 21 Streetwise check reveals that while a number of spice merchants have shops in Sayre, only one location is nearby: a ruined warehouse that held rare spices, years ago. This is the spice house referred to in the divination. The same check can be made during a visit to any spice store in the city to reveal that the Ridolfi family used to have a warehouse near Lowbridge, in Riverdown.

If the PCs fail this check, they can still learn this information the hard way in encounter P1. Ambush in the Plaza (page 90).

P1: Ambush in the Plaza

Encounter Level 14 (5,200 XP)

Setup

4 Laughing Shadow streetfighters (F)
10 Laughing Shadow scrabblers (S)

Telicanthus has gotten word to his ally, the Filth King, that additional githzerai have come to town, and they need to be slain or harassed. A vindictive and cruel servant of Tiamat, the Filth King decides to take matters in his own hands.

Telicanthus long ago recruited the services of the Filth King when he planted members of the Laughing Shadow mercenary outfit among the King's beggars. With the arrival of Odos, Telicanthus sent word to the Filth King to step up efforts to kill the githzerai and their allies. The Filth King has taken things one step further by setting up an ambush to catch and kill the next group to emerge from Kark'din, the githzerai sanctuary. Unfortunately, he didn't tell his troops to target only githzerai, and the PCs are inadvertent targets.

As the PCs leave the githzerai sanctuary and enter the Plaza of Vision, read:

As you leave the building and move into the plaza, you notice that there's movement at the mouths of the alleys around you. Ragged beggars emerge from the shadows brandishing bright, new weapons—and wearing chainmail! The attackers appear well fed, despite the rags and dirt that cover them, and more than proficient with the weapons they're wielding.

4 Laughing Shadow Streetfighters (F) — **Level 13 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human — XP 800 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 128; **Bloodied** 64
AC 29; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24
Speed 6

Katar (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+20 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage (crit 18 + 1d6), and the target is slowed until the end of the streetfighter's next turn.

Shuriken (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 6/12; +19 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 damage.

Cheap Shot (immediate interrupt; usable when a slowed target leaves an adjacent square; requires katar; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+20 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target's movement ends.

Streetfighter Flourish (standard; requires katar; recharge ⚄ ⚅)
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +19 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff+13, Intimidate +13, Stealth +15
Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 19 (+10) **Wis** 17 (+9)
Con 16 (+9) **Int** 11 (+6) **Cha** 10 (+8)
Equipment chainmail, katar, 10 shuriken, beggar's garb

10 Laughing Shadow Scrabblers (S) — **Level 13 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid, human — XP 200 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion
AC 27; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 24
Speed 6

Short Sword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 8 damage, and the scrabbler can shift 2 squares, ignoring difficult terrain.

Shuriken (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 6/12; +18 vs. AC; 7 damage.

Combat Advantage
The scrabbler deals an extra 5 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Bluff+10, Stealth +15
Str 19 (+10) **Dex** 18 (+10) **Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 10 (+6) **Cha** 8 (+5)
Equipment chainmail, short sword, 10 shuriken, beggar's garb

Tactics

The Laughing Shadows reveal themselves when the PCs are roughly in the middle of the square, closing in from every side. The scrabblers enter the plaza from alleys, as do three of the four streetfighters. The last streetfighter hides next to the dry fountain. He holds a magic gem provided by the Filth King. See "Features of the Area" for details.

Features of the Area

Illumination: This encounter can take place during the day or night. If during the day, the area is well lit by diffuse sunlight, with shadows (dim light) in the alleys. If at night, the plaza is in shadow (dim light), and the alleys are shrouded in darkness.

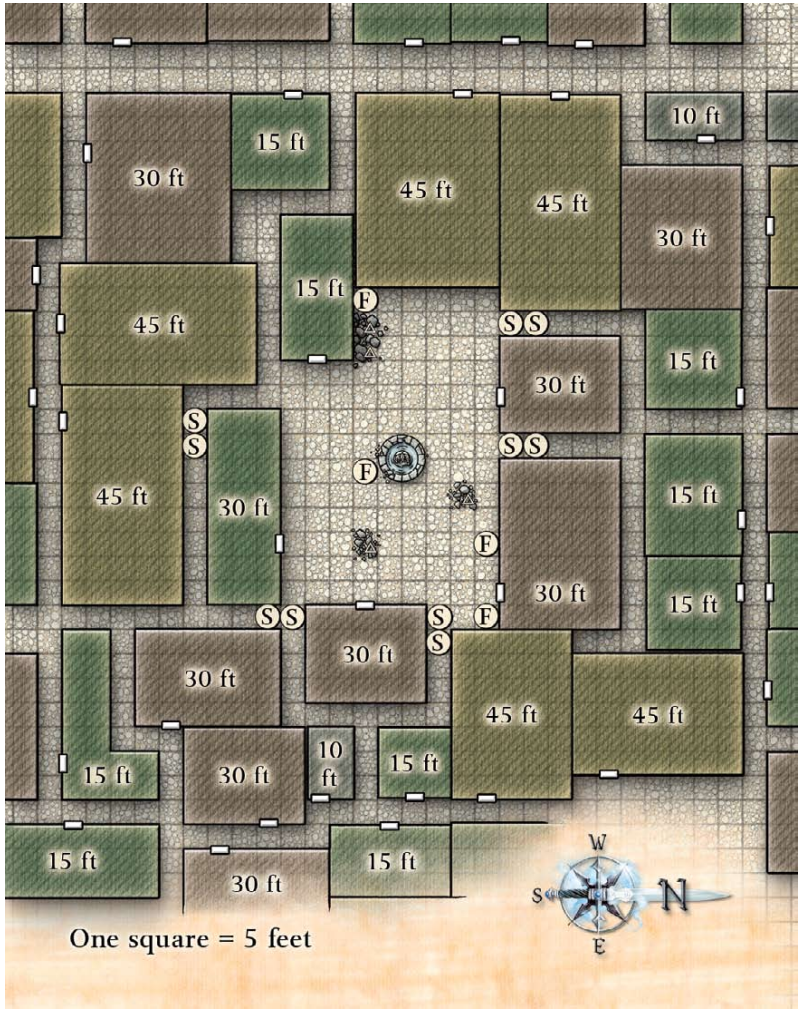
Rubble: The rubble in the plaza qualifies as difficult terrain.

Fountain: The fountain is dry and cracked after decades of disuse. The lip of the empty water bowl rises 10 feet (2 squares) off the ground; rising from the bowl is a weathered statue of an ancient sage gazing up toward the stars. Climbing the fountain requires a DC 16 Athletics check, and it's large enough to provide cover or superior cover depending on positioning.

Alleys: There are seven alleys opening into the Plaza of Vision, each narrow and dark.

Buildings: The buildings range from two to six stories (4 to 12 squares) in height. Climbing the walls requires a DC 16 Athletics check.

Glowing Gem: The gem held aloft by one of the streetfighters is imbued with a temporary magical effect—a blessing of Tiamat—that lasts for the duration of the encounter. At the end of each of the characters' turns, he or she slides 1 square closer to the square the gem is in. The Laughing Shadows are immune to this effect. Even if the streetfighter holding the gem is slain, the magic persists. Only smashing the gem (defenses 20; 20 hp) ends the slide effect.



T2: The Entrance

Encounter Level 12 (3,800 XP)

Setup

Gluttonous cube (G)
2 Laughing Shadow streetfighters (F)
3 Laughing Shadow scrabblers (S)

This encounter does not occur if the beggars have no warning that the PCs are coming. If the PCs have avoided setting off any alarms, boards criss-cross the room 10 feet above the ground, allowing characters to descend the rope ladder and reach the door safely. The five scrabblers who would be defending here are found inside encounter T5: Covet House Temple instead.

The Filth King, the priest of Tiamat who leads Sayre's beggars, has left a hidden surprise in this room for anyone who would try to invade. A stronger than normal gelatinous cube has been placed on the floor beneath the trap door in the ceiling that leads down into this room. The cube has learned to remain perfectly still beneath the rope ladder, waiting for unsuspecting creatures to descend directly into its clutches.

If the alarm has been given and the beggars expect trouble, the boards criss-crossing the room 10 feet above the floor have been removed, and five beggars are hiding on rag-covered platforms that are affixed to the walls. They hold their attacks until they are discovered or the PCs are engaged with the cube.

Crossing the room without the boards is challenging even if the PCs discover the cube and don't descend to the floor. They must traverse the platforms attached to the walls with DC 10 or DC 20 Athletics checks (10 for the adjacent platform, 20 for those with a 5-foot gap between them). Failure means the unlucky PC falls to the floor (provided the character also fails her saving throw), takes 2d10 points of damage, and lands prone.

Read the following aloud if the alarm has not been sounded.

Looking down from the trapdoor, you see a filthy rope ladder that dangles almost all the way to floor, stopping 10 feet above the ground. The room beneath you is otherwise mostly empty. Several platforms jut from the walls—remains of the floors of this multi-story building that appear to have been reinforced. Each platform is covered in piles of rags, the nearest of which is 5 feet below you and attached to the north wall. The remaining platforms are each 5 feet across and descend in regular intervals along the walls of the room to either side. Across the room to the south is another door, but it's strangely 10 feet above the ground floor, above another platform attached to the south wall.

If the alarm was sounded, the PCs can make Perception checks to notice the Laughing Shadows hiding in piles of rags on five of the platforms. Have the attackers make a Stealth check with a +5 bonus (for a total bonus of +20). If the PCs spot them, read the following:

Skulking on some of the platforms are several more beggars like those from the plaza. Hiding in the piles of rags, they throw off their disguises and rise to attack when they realize they've been discovered!

If undiscovered, the Laughing Shadows get a surprise round to attack the PCs.

Gluttonous Cube (G)	**Level 13 Elite Brute**
Large natural beast (blind, ooze)	**XP 1,600**
Initiative +9	**Senses** Perception +10; tremorsense 10
HP 324; **Bloodied** 162	
AC 27; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24	
Immune gaze; **Resist** 15 acid	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 4, see also *engulf*	
Action Points 1	
⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)	
+15 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
Engulf (standard; at-will) ✦ **Acid**	
The gluttonous cube attacks one or two Medium or smaller targets; +14 vs. Reflex (automatically hits an immobilized creature). On a hit, the target is grabbed and pulled into the cube's space; the target is dazed and takes ongoing 15 acid damage until it escapes the grab. A creature that escapes the grab shifts to a square of its choosing adjacent to the cube. The cube can move normally while creatures are engulfed within it.	
Translucent	
A gluttonous cube is invisible until seen (Perception DC 29) or until it attacks. Creatures that fail to notice the gluttonous cube might walk into it, automatically becoming engulfed.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Skills Stealth +14	
Str 18 (+10)	**Dex** 17 (+9) **Wis** 18 (+10)
Con 22 (+12)	**Int** 1 (+1) **Cha** 1 (+1)

2 Laughing Shadow Streetfighters (F) **Level 13 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 800 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 128; **Bloodied** 64
AC 29; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24
Speed 6

⊕ **Katar** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+20 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage (crit 18 + 1d6), and the target is slowed until the end of the streetfighter's next turn.

↗ **Shuriken** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 6/12; +19 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 damage.

↓ **Cheap Shot** (immediate interrupt; usable when a slowed target leaves an adjacent square; requires katar; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+20 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target's movement ends.

✧ **Streetfighter Flourish** (standard; requires katar; recharge ⚄ ⚅)
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +19 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff+13, Intimidate +13, Stealth +15
Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 19 (+10) **Wis** 17 (+9)
Con 16 (+9) **Int** 11 (+6) **Cha** 10 (+8)
Equipment chainmail, katar, 10 shuriken, beggar's garb

3 Laughing Shadow Scrabblers (S) **Level 13 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 200 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion
AC 27; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 24
Speed 6

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 8 damage, and the scrabbler can shift 2 squares, ignoring difficult terrain.

↗ **Shuriken** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 6/12; +18 vs. AC; 7 damage.

Combat Advantage
The scrabbler deals an extra 5 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Bluff+10, Stealth +15
Str 19 (+10) **Dex** 18 (+10) **Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 10 (+6) **Cha** 8 (+5)
Equipment chainmail, short sword, 10 shuriken, beggar's garb

Tactics

In the event that the alarm was sounded, the Laughing Shadows' plan is simple: Wait for the intruders to descend to the floor, and once they're engaged with the cube, attack with their shuriken. If a PC leaps to a platform adjacent to a Laughing Shadow, the mercenary attempts an Athletics check (+11 for streetfighters, +10 for scabblers) to leap to that platform and bull rush (+11 for streetfighters, +10 for scrabblers) the character off to the floor below. A successful Athletics check but a failed bull rush attempt by a Laughing Shadow or PC means the attacker is pushed back onto his platform. Running jumps are not possible in this room.

The cube waits until a creature has descended to the floor, one way or the other, before attacking. If no one is on the floor, the cube positions itself directly beneath a battle, hoping someone will fall on top of it. Any creature that falls onto the cube—whether adventurer or Laughing Shadow—is automatically engulfed. The cube doesn't distinguish between PCs or Laughing Shadows, and attacks the most convenient target each round.

Unknown to them, the Laughing Shadows have no easy way to escape, as the Filth King has locked the door behind them. They might discover this the hard way (see Development).

Features of the Area

Illumination: Dim light is provided by a lantern on a platform attached to the south wall if the alarm has not been sounded. Otherwise, the room is dark.

Exit Door: The Filth King has locked this wooden door behind the scrabblers in this room. It requires a DC 23 Thievery check to open. It leads to the underground street (area T3).

Walls: Climbing the walls requires a DC 20 Athletics check. This is the only way to get off the floor and to the lowest platform 10 feet up, just in front of the door to area T3.

Development

If all but one of the Laughing Shadows is killed, the survivor tries to flee to the door. There, he discovers that the door is locked and turns to fight to the death, cursing the Filth King all the while. The Laughing Shadows pride themselves on their discipline, and will not willingly surrender.

T5: Covet House Temple

Encounter Level 14 or 15 (5,600 XP)

Setup

The Filth King (K)
Laughing Shadow groveler (G)
2 Laughing Shadow streetfighters (F)
6 Laughing Shadow scrabblers (S)

The Filth King is the nominal leader of the beggars in Sayre. More of a spiritual leader than a temporal one, he works to keep his flock safe and regularly cuts deals with locals to avoid their property or harass their competition.

The Filth King was hired by Telicanthus some time ago to harass the githzerai population of the city. Telicanthus doesn't know that the Filth King recognized him (see Development below). The githyanki also supplemented the Filth King's beggars with members of the Laughing Shadows mercenaries.

Read the following if the beggars are not yet aware of the PCs:

You open the doors into an old temple. You can tell it was once sacred to Ioun, but those days are long past. The pews are filled with beggars, all with their backs to you, and a filthy and bedraggled priest across the room stands before an altar.

Read the following if the beggars expect the PCs:

You open the doors into an old temple. You can tell it was once sacred to Ioun, but those days are long past. The pews are filled with beggars, all facing you, and a filthy and bedraggled priest across the room stands before an altar. "Get them!" he hisses.

6 Laughing Shadow Scrabblers (S) Level 13 Minion		
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 200 each
Initiative +12	**Senses** Perception +9	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion		
AC 27; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 24		
Speed 6		
⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**		
+18 vs. AC; 8 damage, and the scrabbler can shift 2 squares, ignoring difficult terrain.		
➢ **Shuriken** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**		
Ranged 6/12; +18 vs. AC; 7 damage.		
Combat Advantage		
The scrabbler deals an extra 5 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common	
Skills Bluff+10, Stealth +15		
Str 19 (+10)	**Dex** 18 (+10)	**Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 14 (+8)	**Int** 10 (+6)	**Cha** 8 (+5)
Equipment chainmail, short sword, 10 shuriken, beggar's garb		

Tactics

The Filth King stays to the rear as much as possible. His devotion to Tiamat has been repaid over the years with several unique abilities, which he uses in devout service to his queen. He begins a battle with *vitrioloic spray*, spewing acid over as many PCs as possible. He's willing to allow himself to be flanked if doing so puts him in good position, relying on the Laughing Shadows and *flanker strike*. He also tries to spread his melee attacks out early in the fight, hoping to poison as many foes as possible.

If the remaining Laughing Shadows are all slain, or if the Filth King is bloodied, he attempts to surrender. He's made lots of money off Telicanthus, but his loyalty is not so deep that it's worth his life. If the PCs refuse to offer quarter, he continues to fight, relying on *vengeful return* to keep him safe.

The Laughing Shadows all fight to the death.

Development

If captured alive or his corpse is subjected to ritual magic such as Speak with Dead, the Filth King can shed some light on recent activity in the city. A few weeks back, the Filth King was approached by a stranger in a cloak. While he didn't see the man's face, the stranger offered to pay substantially if the beggars would harass the githzerai at every opportunity. He even offered the services of mercenaries in his employ—the Laughing Shadows—and a bounty on dead githzerai. The Filth King gladly accepted.

If asked and able to lie, he denies that this was Telicanthus (an Insight check opposed by the Filth King's Bluff check indicates that he is lying), and adds that Telicanthus is publicly known for supporting the presence of the githzerai in the city. The Filth King recognized Telicanthus's voice, though, even though

Filth King (K) **Level 14 Elite Controller**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 2000

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +15
HP 278; **Bloodied** 139
AC 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 27
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6
Action Points 1

Festering Scratch (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
+19 vs. AC; 1d4 + 2 damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).

Awaken Greed (standard; at-will) ✦ **Implement, Psychic**
Ranged 10; +18 vs. Will; 2d8 + 6 psychic damage, and the target slides 4 squares and is slowed until the end of the Beggar King's next turn.

Driving Sickness ✦ **Poison**
The Beggar King makes two *festering scratch* attacks. If both hit the same target, on its next turn, the target must move away from the Beggar King or the ongoing damage increases by 5 points (maximum 15).

Flanker Strike (immediate reaction; usable when an enemy flanks the Beggar King; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
The Beggar King makes a *festering scratch* attack against the triggering enemy.

Vitriolic Spray (standard; encounter) ✦ **Acid, Implement**
Close blast 3; +16 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 4 acid damage, and target is blinded until the end of the Beggar King's next turn.

Vengeful Return (when the Filth King is reduced to 0 hp; daily)
For 5 minutes, the Beggar King appears dead and gains all the effects of the unconscious condition, but he cannot die. He can still see and hear. After 5 minutes, his body is restored, and he regains 20 hit points.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff +18, Intimidate +18, Stealth +14, Thievery +14
Str 10 (+7) **Dex** 15 (+9) **Wis** 17 (+10)
Con 19 (+11) **Int** 20 (+12) **Cha** 23 (+13)
Equipment hide armor, holy symbol of Tiamat, beggar's garb

2 Laughing Shadow Streetfighters (F) **Level 13 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 800

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 128; **Bloodied** 64
AC 29; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24
Speed 6

Katar (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+20 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage (crit 18 + 1d6), and the target is slowed until the end of the streetfighter's next turn.

Shuriken (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 6/12; +19 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 damage.

Cheap Shot (immediate interrupt; usable when a slowed target leaves an adjacent square; requires katar; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+20 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target's movement ends.

Streetfighter Flourish (standard; requires katar; recharge ⚄ ⚅)
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +19 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff+13, Intimidate +13, Stealth +15
Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 19 (+10) **Wis** 17 (+9)
Con 16 (+9) **Int** 11 (+6) **Cha** 10 (+8)
Equipment chainmail, katar, 10 shuriken, beggar's garb

Laughing Shadow Groveler (G) **Level 13 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 800

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 103; **Bloodied** 51
AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25; +2 to all defenses against marked enemies
Speed 7

Katar (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage (crit 18 + 2d6).

Shuriken (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 6/12; +18 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage.

Covert Attack (immediate reaction; when an ally attacks an enemy the ally has marked because of *cringe*; requires katar or shuriken; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Targets the enemy the triggering ally attacked; the groveler makes a katar attack against an adjacent enemy or a shuriken attack against a nonadjacent enemy. *Hit:* 4d6 + 6 damage (with katar, crit 30 damage + 2d6).

Cringe (standard; requires an ally in the area; at-will)
Close burst 10; the groveler chooses up to one ally in the area per enemy in the area. The enemy is considered to be marked by the chosen ally until the end of the groveler's next turn. Each ally can mark only one enemy in this way. The groveler gains +2 to all defenses against marked enemies.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff+16, Stealth +15
Str 12 (+7) **Dex** 22 (+10) **Wis** 17 (+9)
Con 19 (+10) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 20 (+11)
Equipment leather armor, katar, 10 shuriken, beggar's garb

the githyanki was doing an excellent job concealing his accent. The greedy Filth King has been sitting on this information, waiting for an opportunity to use it to extort the powerful and wealthy githyanki merchant. He's unwilling to part with his knowledge, thinking of it as his retirement fund, unless the PCs catch him at his lie.

If the PCs drop the Filth King, his vengeful return ability activates. If the characters are still present in the area 5 minutes after his "death," he remains completely motionless. A Heal check made by a character who examines his body can be opposed by the Filth King's Bluff check. Success reveals he is alive. Otherwise, he waits until all the PCs move to the other side of the pit before making a stealthy escape. If the PCs engage the treasure golem (see "The Guardian of Greed" on page 97), the Filth King likewise attempts to escape, even if not all the characters move to the other side of the pit. If combat begins with the treasure golem, the king gains a +5 bonus on a Stealth check to escape in the middle of the fight.

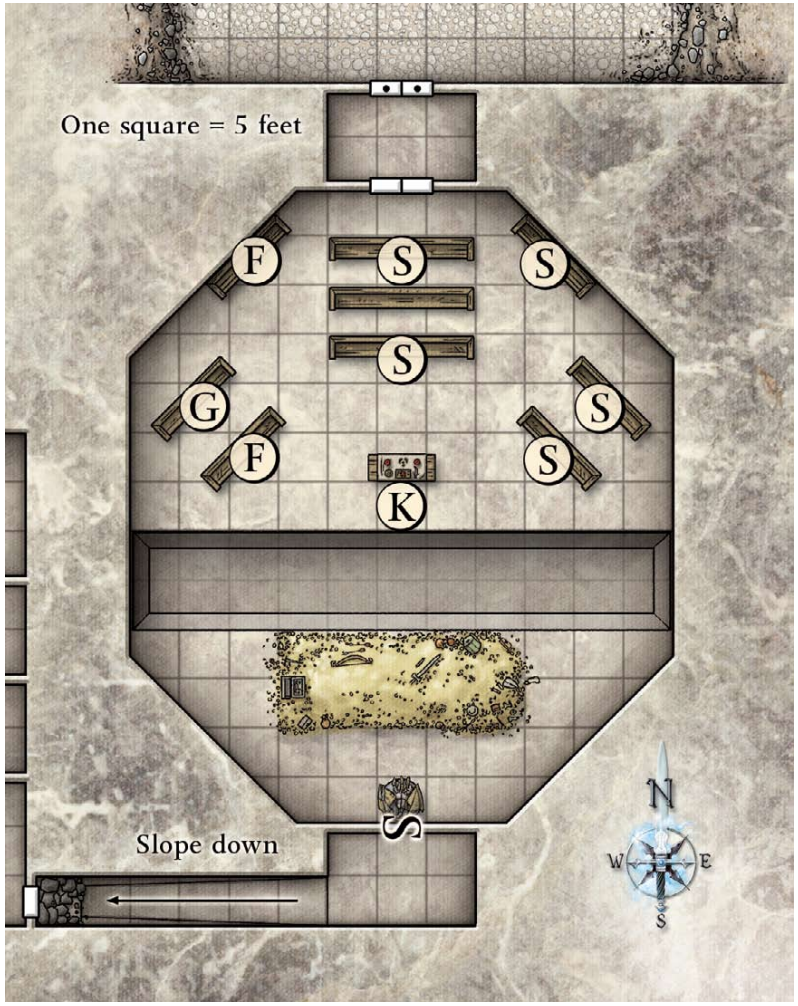
Features of the Area

Illumination: The room is filled with bright light from torches along the walls.

Pews: A pew can be used to gain cover.

Pit: A 20-foot deep, 10-foot wide pit separates the main temple from a vast pile of wealth that sits before a statue of Tiamat. This wealth forms the accumulated offerings of the city's beggars to Tiamat over the past several generations. Any interaction with this treasure triggers its guardian (see tactical encounter T6 for details).

The bottom of the pit is littered with the skeletal remains of would-be thieves, making the bottom of the pit difficult terrain.



T6: The Guardian of Greed

Encounter Level 14 (5,000 XP)

Setup

Treasure golem (G)

The vast mound of treasure on the far side of the pit is actually a treasure golem created to serve Tiamat, an animated guardian made from the treasure it guards. It is the embodiment of greed, and it blindly attacks thieves. It formd instantly if even one of its coins is picked up.

The golem's weakness to be *pacified by tribute* is not obvious. A DC 23 Religion check indicated that ancient historical texts often pictured worshipers throwing vast quantities of coins to an enraged coin golem.

When a PC touches the pile of treasure, read the following:

The coins begin to slide and clink, moving by themselves as they surge upward. In seconds, a five-headed dragon made entirely out of treasure stands before you. Its hiss is the sound of coins rubbing together, and its heads snap forward to attack.

Tactics

Once formed, the treasure golem attacks as long as anyone remains standing on its side of the pit, although it uses *gleamshard* to attack enemies that target it from the other side of the pit. It will not pursue enemies that retreat to the far side of the pit unless those enemies continue to attack it from range. It will not pursue enemies beyond the door to the temple for any reason.

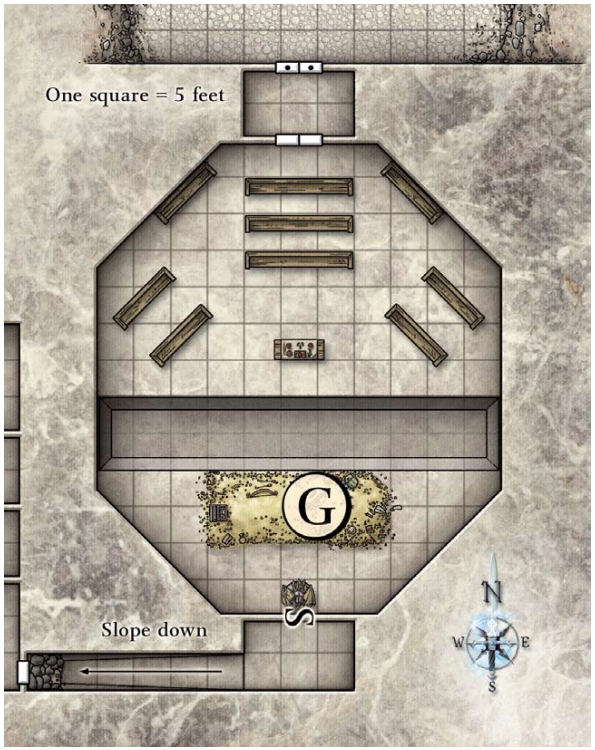
Features of the Area

Illumination: The room is filled with bright light from torches along the walls.

Pews: A pew can be used to gain cover.

Pit: A 20-foot deep, 10-foot wide pit divides the room. Bones litter the bottom of the pit, making all those squares difficult terrain.

Sculpture: A rough, handmade statue of Tiamat sits behind the pile of coins. The statue has clearly been assembled by an inexpert artist, made from cast-off junk and scavenged portions of other statues. The statue sits in front of a secret door that is easily found (Perception DC 18) once the statue is moved or inspected closely. The statue can also provide cover.



Treasure Golem (G)	**Level 14 Solo Brute**
Large natural animate (construct)	XP 5,000
Initiative +5	**Senses** Perception +6; darkvision, tremorsense 5
HP 700; **Bloodied** 350; see also *berserk attack*	
AC 26; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23	
Immune disease, poison	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 6; can't shift	
Action Points 2	
Slam (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d10 + 6 damage, and the target slides 2 squares or is knocked prone.	
Gleamshard (standard; at-will) ✦ **Force**	
Ranged 20; +26 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 force damage, and the target slides 2 squares or is knocked prone.	
Double Attack (standard; at-will)	
The treasure golem makes two basic attacks.	
Berserk Attacks (immediate reaction; usable when damaged by an attack while bloodied; at-will)	
The treasure golem makes two basic attacks against random targets.	
Hoard Blast (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅)	
Close burst 3; +22 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 7 damage, and prone targets cannot stand until the end of the golem's next turn. *Miss:* Half damage. *Effect:* The golem bursts into its component pieces, filling the area and gaining insubstantial until the start of its next turn, when it reappears within 5 squares of its last space.	
Weight of Greed (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ✦ **Psychic**	
Close burst 3; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is dominated until the end of the golem's next turn. *Miss:* Half damage.	
Alignment Unaligned	**Languages** –
Str 22 (+13)	**Dex** 10 (+7) **Wis** 8 (+6)
Con 25 (+13)	**Int** 3 (+3) **Cha** 3 (+3)

Development

If the PCs are wise, they might retreat from the golem and take an opportunity to replenish their abilities with an extended rest. Of course, the Filth King tries to slip away if combat begins with the treasure golem, gaining a +5 bonus on a Stealth check to do so in the middle of the fight.

T8: Vault of Knowledge

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

Setup

3 archivists (A)
5 bone scribes (B)

The Vault of Knowledge was once a library of Ioun hidden beneath the ancient temple in Auger. When the city was destroyed, the sages were trapped inside and never rescued. They have read the same books and the same scrolls for centuries, and now crave only fresh information. They're happy to devour it from the PCs' brains if necessary.

The Vault used to be full of tomes. Now the series of small rooms are completely empty, and every inch of wall space is covered with crisscrossing lines of text from a multitude of books, all carved into the walls.

Read the following aloud:

When you pry open the door, you see a large stone room. It looks like it was once a library, but any books have long since rotted away. Instead, the walls are covered with thousands of lines of carved text, filling the space.

Rising from the ground around the room is a group of pale, emaciated creatures. They immediately begin to lurch your way. Their fingers are missing any flesh that might have once been there, and each fingerbone is sharpened into a point.

5 Bone Scribes (B) **Level 13 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 200 each

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 27; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 24
Immune disease
Speed 7

Mind Touch (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
+16 vs. Will; 4 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to Will and is slowed until the end of the bone scribe's next turn. The bone scribe can shift 1 square.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Str 10 (+10) **Dex** 14 (+9) **Wis** 8 (+6)
Con 20 (+11) **Int** 23 (+12) **Cha** 19 (+10)

3 Bone Archivists (A) **Level 14 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 1,000 each

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +19; darkvision
HP 109; **Bloodied** 54
AC 26; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26
Immune disease; **Resist** 10 psychic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 6

Mind Touch (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
+19 vs. Will; 1d10 + 6 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to Will and is slowed until the end of the bone archivist's next turn. The bone archivist can shift 3 squares.

Siphon Memory (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +19 vs. Will; 2d4 + 6 psychic damage, and the target can make only basic attacks or use at-will powers until the end of the bone archivist's next turn.

Knowledge Barrage (standard; encounter) ✦ **Psychic**
Area burst 2 within 10; targets enemies; +17 vs. Will; 3d6 + 6 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

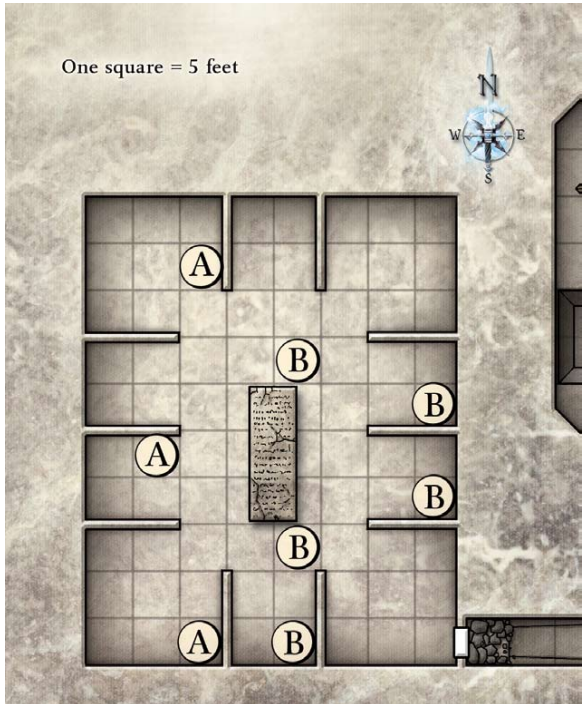
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Str 12 (+8) **Dex** 15 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+7)
Con 19 (+12) **Int** 23 (+13) **Cha** 20 (+12)

Tactics

Eager for sustenance, the bone scribes move forward to attack while the archivists stay around the edges of the combat. The bone scribes uses their sharpened fingerbones to scrape thoughts from their targets' head, weakening them for the attacks of the archivists. When a scribe uses *mind touch* or *siphon memory*, memories from their target etch themselves as words across the bone scribe's papyrus-like skin. The archivists target foes struck by the scribes first.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The room is completely dark, but the undead give off a soft glow. This is the equivalent of dim light.



Development

All the original scrolls and books have turned to dust, but the contents of the original books are transcribed on the wall of the library . . . somewhat. Many of the sentences are in no discernable order. As the librarians grew more insane and the walls began to fill up, they wrote sentences anywhere they could find room. The result can be confusing and time-consuming to comprehend.

This room can be useful to PCs hoping to research some subject. A researcher gains a +1 bonus to any Arcana, History, or Religion skill check made in the room for every full hour spent researching here, up to a maximum of +5. The check is made at the end of the research time. All the text on the walls is in Common.

In addition, research in this chamber reveals information specifically related to the Bitter Glass. Show the accounts from Auglos's journal from the sidebar to the players if the characters try to look into communication devices or the destruction of Auger here.

No matter what the characters research in this room, show them the information in the second sidebar. Although originally recorded in a scroll over four hundred years ago, this message from a long-ago prophet is meant for the characters' eyes.

In it, he warns against trusting Telicanthus, urges the characters to seek out the Bitter Glass in the ruins of Auglos's tower beneath Telicanthus's mansion, gives clues as to where the tower can be found, and warns of a great threat. He also encourages the characters to trust Amyria and follow her lead to bring together the Coalition. Allow the characters to form their own conclusions from the message, but feel free to give them some direction through roleplaying or skill checks (such as Streetwise to learn of the dwarven Scrollstone brothers of Deep Cartography; see page 54).

Writing on the Walls

"A matrix of blown glass can be formed into a mathematically perfect sounding chamber, then used to amplify magical resonance. In theory, disconnected sheets of a similar substance can be attuned to the master. This would allow communication at unlimited distance. The question is: How can one handle the planar boundary? When I began this research in Nefelus, I never expected that this would be a concern…"

"A problem has developed. I need some method for shunting away the psychic residue cast off during communication. This seems to be quite toxic. I believe that I can redirect it into the Astral Sea, where it should do no harm to anyone…"

"The final Glass is more beautiful than I could have hoped. My apprentices have outdone themselves. A full 30 feet in diameter, it has anchored itself into the very nature of our plane, and hangs in space. Our ritual went flawlessly and it has taken on a life of its own; as thoughts travel from one external pane to another, the Glass shimmers like the night sky. It is quite beautiful. It seems to be invulnerable from the outside, as I intended, but the same protections have not transferred into the interior. This worries me."

"The interior of the Glass becomes a psychic maelstrom if the information flow is not redirected. I have succeeded in rerouting the rogue energies to the Astral Sea. So long as no one is bothered by them, I see no risk; and in such a plane, what are the chances that they will be discovered? So small as to be infinitesimal…"

"I am making only a few select panes linked to the glass, but it would be just as simple to make many. I expect that selling these to far-flung allies could make me a rich man indeed. I will need to consider it."

—from the diaries of Auglos of Nefelus

Message from the Past

"You're watching me. I can see you, but you don't know that. You're listening to my words even though I'm long dead. No, not you! Idiot. You're just writing down my words because you were told to by the old man with a beard and a magic glass. I'm talking to the other people, the ones reading this on the wall. They know I'm dead. Oh yes, dead, mud in my mouth, river arisen! I sing of a ship that sails the air, that brings swords and fire. You've fought it, too, but it's worse for you. We're just going to die. They'll kill us all because of what the bearded man does, talking through the mirror. They'll just flood the room, and that will solve their problem until he finds it again. He's been looking for it a long time. You think he likes you but it's a lie. There was digging, you see, and cleaning, and many false leads. He'll use it to conquer you all, but no one will believe you. You'll have to prove him a liar. They can talk through it, you see. They've managed to do it, and the armies whisper through the blue darkness in a way that no one else can hear. You're dead if you don't stop it. Even now they are discussing you. "Distract them," he is told, "this is too important to ruin." But you can. Boy! Boy, I demand a goose! Pluck it and ruin it and save yourself if you find the right spot. Look for the old tower when no one expects you. It isn't where they think it is. Ask the dwarves if you like, the brothers who dream of maps. Because in the days to come SHE will spread herself, and none will be safe from HER reach, so you may wish to trust the speech of the Bladed Girl. Trust, trust her if no one else. If her people do not come together, they will certainly be ripped apart. Like my goose? I am so very hungry. I could use some tea. Boy!"

—verbatim account from the recorded visions of Graiden Brackenhaus, oracular guest of Seer Auglos of Auger, as scribed by Brother Pinnot from the Church of Ioun.

SC2: The Coalition

Encounter Level 14 (5,000 XP)

Setup

Begin by reading the following:

After meeting Amyria just after dawn at your inn, you've accompanied her to a building on the University of Sayre's campus. The small lecture hall you've entered looks like it has previously been used as a place to learn about the more esoteric elements of arcane magical theory. A long table has been placed in the middle of the room, and most of the benches that normally occupy the space pushed to the walls. Already seated at the table are six members of the Coalition.

If the PCs successfully convinced Odos to attend, continue:

Just as Amyria begins to look nervous at Odos's absence, the githzerai walks smoothly into the room—navigating the furnishings despite his blindness—and takes a seat nearest the door. "Am I late?" he asks with an arched eyebrow.

The goals of the PCs in this skill challenge are clear, assuming they continue to follow Amyria's lead. On the way to the event, she outlines what she hopes will happen, and begs the PCs' aid in bringing her plans to fruition. At this point, the PCs don't know who they'll be dealing with, other than Odos, and are likely to follow the deva's lead. If the characters show resistance to some portion of Amyria's plan, feel free to adapt to any changes to the meeting. If the PCs see fit to add to Amyria's agenda, she's eminently open to their ideas—she really wants their support, and respects their experience and wisdom a great deal. She does stress the importance of Coalition sanctioning their activities, however. As she puts it, "No government will take you seriously without the Coalition's backing. You'll need their support, but that will also open doors for you, and enable you to get places and see things you wouldn't have before."

Free-spirited adventurers still might not understand how being part of the Coalition is beneficial, but Amyria points out that all the military and financial aid represented in the room is vital to coordinating the defense of the world. She also mentions that without the Coalition, the githyanki will be able to continue picking off individual, strategically important cities and areas as they see fit, and that not every region is as fortunate as Elsir Vale to have such stalwart champions willing to protect its borders.

Amyria's goals in the meeting are as follows:

- ✦ Transfer control of military units under command of Coalition members to the Coalition council.
- ✦ Vote on a Coaltion leader.
- ✦ Vote on the relevance and importance of Amyria's dream, and whether it warrants investigation.
- ✦ Name the Coalition.
- ✦ Investigate Telicanthus and find the githyanki communication hub.

The last goal is Amyria's most pressing, since it's something immediate she can (hopefully) get the Coalition members behind. She knows that without a solid goal to pursue, the Coalition runs the risk of fracturing before it ever even fully forms.

Why the PCs?

If the PCs ask why they're included in this meeting, Amyria explains that news of their defeat of General Zithiruun has spread across the land. In addition, Amyria herself has spoken glowingly of the heroes in all her individual meetings with the Coalition members. The adventurers are considered honored guests of Sayre and of the Coalition. They have been summoned (at Amyria's guidance) as material experts on githyanki tactics and motivations, as well as defensive strategies to employ against the attackers.

Rules of the Gathering

The Coalition is an open forum, and everyone invited can speak freely. But only the seven members of the Coalition have a final vote on the body's actions. An idea put forth for a vote must be seconded, then a vote will be taken. Simple majority rules. Amyria, as Lord Torrance points out, is not given a vote, although all the members are interested in what she has to say.

In this skill challenge, the PCs can try to work toward the success of all five of Amyria's goals. The skill challenge is only considered successful, however, if the PCs can convince the Coalition to pursue an investigation into the githyanki's means of communication. They can do this by winning over any three members of the Coalition, other than Kalad (who is already on their side). The skill challenge is set up to run in a format that encourages the characters to plead their case to each member of the Coalition, trying to win them over one at a time. Each Coalition member responds to different proposals—some of the topics interest them greatly, others less so. So in essence, in this skill challenge, the PCs are attempting to find common ground with three of the members. Failure at this ultimate goal results in a challenge failure.

As such, each Coalition member represents a mini-skill challenge of complexity 1 within the larger, more complex skill challenge. Gaining 4 successes before 3 failures against a Coalition member brings that NPC to the PCs' side. However, indivudal failures against a single Coalition member do not count as failures toward the overall skill challenge. Instead, the PCs accrue an overall failure only if they fail to win over a Coalition member by failing the mini-skill challenge targeting that member.

In addition, as the characters make successes that pertain to each of Amyria's five goals, track those successes separately from the successes needed to complete the skill challenge (both the challenge at large and the one represented by each member). Each goal requires three successes to complete, which you'll note totals fifteen successes (three more than the PCs need to succeed at the overall skill challenge). In effect, even after the PCs have the backing of the Coalition, they might still not have pushed their complete agenda through. The PCs can continue to argue for their agendas after they've achieved overall success. Failing the skill challenge means the PCs are dismissed, leaving some goals potentially unresolved. Finally, failures that accrue to accomplish goals after the overall challenge is successful do not retroactively cause the skill challenge to fail.

As you run the skill challenge, feel free to award bonuses to skill checks if the PCs are inventive in their arguments or roleplay especially well. In addition, if the PCs find a creative use for a skill not on the list below, feel free to allow them the check (for example, using Acrobatics or Athletics to reenact a dramatic battle against General Zithiruun).

Convincing the Coalition **Level 14**
Skill Challenge 5,000 XP

As you find seats on the benches along the walls, the members of the Coalition take a moment to consult notes, size each other up, and otherwise prepare themselves for the proceedings.

The party attempts to convince the Coalition of the wisdom of Amyria's goals.

Complexity

5 (12 successes before 3 failures; see above)

Primary Skills

Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Insight

Secondary Skills

Intimidate, Nature, Perception, Religion

Victory

The party earns the respect of the Coalition and gains their approval to act as their agents in the fight against the githyanki. Letters to this effect are hastily drawn up for each character. Any of Amyria's goals that are successfully completed are likewise acted on.

Defeat

The party does not receive sanctioning to act on the Coalition's behalf at this time. Any other of Amyria's goals that the characters fail to accomplish (see Setup, above) are likewise not acted on by the Coalition. The group continues to squabble and jockey for power for several more days until the leaders leave for their homes. The Coalition is not dead, however—it's start is just delayed, which proves costly (see Development, below).

Each of the Coalition members is associated not only with the skills that will sway them to the PCs' side, but also those of Amyria's goals that interest them. When the PCs target a member of the Coalition, they should know which skills will impact the member, as well as to which of Amyria's goals they'd like to credit any success (with the ultimate goal of 12 total successes and three successes for each smaller goal).

For convenience, here are Amyria's goals once more.

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military
- ✦ Coalition Leader
- ✦ Amyria's Dream
- ✦ Name the Coalition
- ✦ Investigate Telicanthus

Arcana (DC 18)

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military: The PC makes a compelling case for coordinating the efforts of Sayre, the githzerai, and other networks controlled by the Coalition in an effort to thwart the magic of the githyanki. Specifically mentioning the githyanki's flying ships or their connection to red dragons results in a +2 bonus to the check made to complete this goal.
- ✦ Amyria's Dream: The PC mentions that the Coalition member being addressed must have some knowledge that can help interpret Amyria's dream and help them all understand what it means.
- ✦ Investigate Telicanthus: The PC brings up the green glass device spotted by Odos in the attack at Akma'ad (and possibly the same device used by the possessed spy Gallia), positing that the master glass merchant might have information about these devices, if he's not responsible for their creation.

Bluff (DC 23)

- ✦ Coalition Leader: The PC flatters the Coalition member, appealing to her ego and suggesting that she could use her immense wisdom to help select the appropriate leader for the august assembly in the room. (A follow-up free DC 18 Insight check, not applicable to the challenge, reveals that Fariex sees through this attempt but is so amused by the attempt that he's swayed in spite of himself, while Inogo's ego is genuinely moved by this plea.)
- ✦ Investigate Telicanthus: The PC exaggerates the threat of having a githyanki operating openly in an area near so many attacked regions. If a character attempts this check against Lord Torrance, it is made with a -2 penalty.

Diplomacy (DC 21)

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military: The PC makes a compelling case for coordinating the efforts of all the military groups in the room, assuaging concerns about a single individual controlling the actions of the united military efforts by reminding the Coalition that everyone will still have a vote in how the new military structure is utilized. If the coordinated efforts of the PCs and city defenders at Overlook are mentioned, Kalad speaks up and aids this check, giving the PCs a +2 bonus.
- ✦ Coalition Leader: In a compelling gesture, the PC congratulates all the members of the Coalition for their foresight in forming this group, while simultaneously indicating that while all in the room are clearly capable leaders, someone must have the ability to make a final say on matters of import. If the PC mentions Amyria for this position, the check is made with a -2 penalty.
- ✦ Name the Coalition: The PC mentions that the Coalition will gain more respect and be likely to gain more members

and support with a name other than "the Coalition." If the PC makes a suggestion for a name, the check is made with a +2 bonus.

- ✦ Investigate Telicanthus: The PC lays out the case against the githyanki noble in a compelling and organized fashion. If the characters interrogated the Filth King and the PC brings up the information from that interview, the check is made with a +2 bonus.

History (DC 21)

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military: The PC references other ancient battles in which allies merged their military forces to great effect.
- ✦ Name the Coalition: The PC makes a compelling historical case for the power of names to inspire and engage their members. If the PC or PCs are members of an organization already and use this as an example of their own success, the check is made with a +2 bonus.

Insight (DC 23)

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military: With this check, the PC recognizes that this goal has the members of the Coalition most uneasy, enabling them to better couch their words to assuage the members' fears. Success on this check grants the PCs a +5 bonus on the next skill check made in the challenge.
- ✦ Amyria's Dream: The PCs recognize that Inogo and Odos have a fascination with Amyria's dream based on common ground, as both believe in signs from higher powers. This helps the characters better reconcile the differences between the two leaders, granting the PCs a +2 bonus on the next skill check made in the challenge.
- ✦ Investigate Telicanthus: A successful check reveals that Lord Torrance is not only nervous about the prospect of investigating one of his city's most prominent citizens—he's actually afraid that revealing any dirty laundry in Telicanthus's activities will reflect poorly on his judgment as a leader and anger the githyanki, making Sayre a more prominent target. He believes that Telicanthus's presence gives Sayre some protection against attack. If this check is successful, the PCs can soothe Lord Torrance's fears. The next check made that targets Lord Torrance gains a +5 bonus.

Intimidate (DC 23)

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military: The PC bullies Inogo, all but calling him a coward for not being willing to risk his city's troops for the greater good.
- ✦ Name the Coalition: Shaming the indecisive Deacon, the PC calls for action on at least this "one simple task."
- ✦ Coalition Leader: As with the Coalition's name, the PC makes a point of calling out Inogo for being unwilling to even agree that a leader is necessary.

Nature (DC 21)

- ✦ Amyria's Dream: The PC calls on Caliandra's wisdom and knowledge of the natural world to aid the characters in their interpretation of the dream.
- ✦ Name the Coalition: The PC asks if perhaps the name of the Coalition could be something that reflects the strength and tenacity of the mortal world, calling on Caliandra to use her insight to help them find a suitable title.

Perception (DC 23)

- ✦ Coalition Leader: The PC recognizes that Kalad, Fariex, Inogo, and Odos are not interested in the position—but that the other three members are all quite interested in becoming the Coalition's first leader. Success here means the PCs can use this knowledge to gain a +2 bonus on the next check made against Quelenna, Caliandra, or Lord Torrance.
- ✦ Amyria's Dream: The PC notices that the targeted Coalition member is especially interested in a particular aspect of the dream, and that bringing it up in detail causes that individual to react more favorably to the characters on this topic. Success means the PCs can use this knowledge to gain a +2 bonus on the next check made against the Coalition member targeted with this check.
- ✦ Investigate Telicanthus: The PC notices that the targeted member shares pointed looks with other members of the Coalition when Telicanthus's name is brought up. The PCs gain a +2 bonus on the next check made to accomplish this goal, if necessary.

Religion (DC 18)

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military: The PC simultaneously praises the strength of the targeted Coalition member's military might and strength, and asks how he could possibly let so many other good people in the world suffer by not lending his divine support to the Coalition's cause.
- ✦ Amyria's Dream: The PC asks the targeted member for insight on the dream directly, simultaneously appealing to her ego and gaining valuable knowledge in the process.

ODOS

Complexity

1 (4 successes before 3 failures; see above)

Arcana (DC 18)

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military
- ✦ Amyria's Dream
- ✦ Investigate Telicanthus

Diplomacy (DC 21)

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military
- ✦ Coalition Leader
- ✦ Name the Coalition
- ✦ Investigate Telicanthus

History (DC 21)

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military
- ✦ Name the Coalition

Insight (DC 23)

Insight can only be used twice against Odos, once for each of the goals listed below.

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military
- ✦ Amyria's Dream

Religion (DC 18)

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military
- ✦ Amyria's Dream

FARIEX

Complexity

1 (4 successes before 3 failures; see above)

Arcana (DC 18)

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military
- ✦ Amyria's Dream
- ✦ Investigate Telicanthus

Bluff (DC 23)

- ✦ Coalition Leader
- ✦ Investigate Telicanthus

Diplomacy (DC 21)

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military
- ✦ Coalition Leader
- ✦ Name the Coalition
- ✦ Investigate Telicanthus

Insight (DC 23)

Insight can only be used once against Fariex for the goal listed below.

- ✦ Transfer Control of Military

Perception (DC 23)

Perception can only be used a total of three times against Fariex, once for each of the goals listed below.

- ✦ Coalition Leader
- ✦ Amyria's Dream
- ✦ Investigate Telicanthus

LORD TORRANCE

Complexity
1 (4 successes before 3 failures; see above)
Arcana (DC 18)
✦ Transfer Control of Military
✦ Amyria's Dream
✦ Investigate Telicanthus
Diplomacy (DC 21)
Transfer Control of Military
✦ Coalition Leader
✦ Name the Coalition
✦ Investigate Telicanthus
Insight (DC 23)
Insight can only be used twice against Lord Torrance, once for each of the goals listed below.
✦ Transfer Control of Military
✦ Investigate Telicanthus

QUELENNA

Complexity
1 (4 successes before 3 failures; see above)
Diplomacy (DC 21)
✦ Transfer Control of Military
✦ Coalition Leader
✦ Name the Coalition
✦ Investigate Telicanthus
History (DC 21)
✦ Transfer Control of Military
✦ Name the Coalition
Insight (DC 23)
Insight can only be used once against Quelenna for the goal listed below.
✦ Transfer Control of Military
Perception (DC 23)
Perception can only be used three times against Quelenna, once for each of the goals listed below.
✦ Coalition Leader
✦ Amyria's Dream
✦ Investigate Telicanthus

CALIANDRA

Complexity
1 (4 successes before 3 failures; see above)
Diplomacy (DC 21)
✦ Transfer Control of Military
✦ Coalition Leader
✦ Name the Coalition
✦ Investigate Telicanthus
History (DC 21)
✦ Transfer Control of Military
✦ Name the Coalition
Insight (DC 23)
Insight can only be used once against Caliandra for the goal listed below.
✦ Transfer Control of Military
Nature (DC 21)
✦ Amyria's Dream
✦ Name the Coalition

INOGO

Complexity
1 (4 successes before 3 failures; see above)
Bluff (DC 23)
✦ Coalition Leader
✦ Investigate Telicanthus
Diplomacy (DC 21)
✦ Transfer Control of Military
✦ Coalition Leader
✦ Name the Coalition
✦ Investigate Telicanthus
Insight (DC 23)
Insight can only be used twice against Inogo, once for each of the goals listed below.
✦ Transfer Control of Military
✦ Amyria's Dream
Intimidate (DC 23)
✦ Transfer Control of Military
✦ Name the Coalition
Perception (DC 23)
Perception can only be used a total of three times against Inogo, once for each of the goals listed below.
✦ Coalition Leader
✦ Amyria's Dream
✦ Investigate Telicanthus
Religion (DC 18)
✦ Transfer Control of Military
✦ Amyria's Dream

LUNCH BREAK

After the PCs have been at the skill challenge for a while, have someone on the Coalition council call for a break, for lunch and to give everyone a chance for air. During this period, everyone at the meeting mills about, servants bring in refreshments, and most importantly, the PCs have a chance to do some casual lobbying on behalf of their agendas.

Bluff (DC 23)
Fariex breaks out a Three-Dragon Ante deck and asks if anyone is up for a quick game. The (apparently) human Fariex is a dazzling cardshark, with a range of complex shuffles and card tricks up his sleeve. But he's also an honest gambler. A successful check means the PC manages to win the game (one way or the other), walk away with 50 gp, and a +5 bonus on the next check made to influence Fariex.

Endurance (DC 21)
Odos pulls forth a flask of a potent githzerai liquor called fekk. He takes a sip, grimaces quickly, and shows a flash of a rare smile. If a characters shows any curiosity about the beverage, Odos offers a sip. A successful check means the character takes the offered sip of the potent, bizarrely flavored alcohol without undue effect, gaining a +5 bonus on the next check to influence Odos.

Heal (DC 18)
The PC overhears Caliandra speaking about one of her grandsons, who has been suffering from a peculiar illness of the lungs. Based solely on the descriptions of the symptoms, the PC successfully diagnoses the illness, and, most importantly, convinces Caliandra she's correct, earning a success toward winning Caliandra over and a success against any goal on Caliandra's list (see above) of the PC's choice.

Stealth (DC 23)
The PC notices Lord Torrance and Quelenna in the corner in a heated discussion, and manages to sidle close enough to eavesdrop without being noticed. The character's knowledge from a successful check results in a +5 bonus on the next check made against either Lord Torrance or Quelenna in the skill challenge.

Religion (DC 18)
Inogo stands mostly alone during the break, sipping a drink and observing the rest of the room with a neutral expression. With a successful check, the PC engages Inogo in conversation about the one topic that always draws him out: Erathis. Success also earns a modicum of respect from the quiet priest, and +5 bonus on the next check made to influence him.

Development

This is a complex and difficult skill challenge, and it's very likely the PCs do not accomplish all of Amyria's goals here. But success overall does get them Coalition sanctioning for their future activities in Sayre and elsewhere, provided they're on Coalition business at the time. Success and failure for each individual goal results in varied action by the Coalition.

Transfer Control of Military: If successful, the Coalition votes 5–2 in favor of this motion, led by Kalad and seconded by Fariex. Inogo and Lord Torrance are the only two who hold out against this prospect. On Amyria's suggestion, however, Kalad is named the Coalition's general, which soothes Inogo a great deal. If the PCs fail, not all is lost. The Coalition votes 4–3 against the motion (Kalad, Fariex, and Quelenna are the three ayes). In one week's time, the PCs hear of three more towns razed to the ground by githyanki invaders, totaling almost 11,000 dead. All three were towns near Sherrbyr, and Inogo changes his vote in an emergency meeting. Kalad is named the Coalition's general.

Coalition Leader: If successful, Lord Torrance immediately moves that only a sitting member of the Coalition can be considered, seconded by Quelenna. This motion is passed with a 6–1 vote, Kalad being the only dissenter as he grumbles loudly that the clear choice for leadership is Amyria. For her part, the deva shows no emotion other than pleasure that another of her goals has been met. The characters and Amyria are asked to leave the room, and after a heated, hour-long debate, the new leader of the Coalition is announced as Lord Divian Torrance. Failure means the Coalition has no central leadership, and in a remarkable move, Kalad announces immediately that he is withdrawing from the group, apologizing tearfully to Amyria. "Without a leader, we're a headless, bickering bunch," he says. "I'll see to the defense of the Vale, and you can come collect me from Overlook when you've pulled your heads from the sand." Less than a week later, the city of Civiron, a sister city to Sayre, is burned to the ground, 5,000 are killed, and the Coalition elects Lord Torrance as its leader, then sends an emissary to bring Kalad back.

Amyria's Dream: Success on this goal means the Coalition votes unanimously to take Amyria's dream, and the threat it represents, seriously. Inogo and Odos find common ground here, and unearth a grudging respect for one another. The characters can make DC 23 Religion and Insight checks to try and decipher the dream, or aid members of the Coalition in their efforts (assume their checks are made with a +10 bonus). Success indicates that the Coalition agrees to let Amyria lead the way on this issue, giving her the ability to coordinate efforts to root out the "spider" of Sayre. Even if the PCs failed at the overall skill challenge, but succeeded on this goal, Amyria's sanctioning by the Coalition gives the PCs the ability to act on her behalf, and she immediately engages them to help her in these efforts. Failure here changes almost nothing, although it means that if Amyria and the PCs act on the dream, they do so at risk of the Coalition's—and Lord Torrance's—wrath.

Name the Coalition: Success means the Coalition votes unanimously to give the group an actual name. Feel free to throw out as many ideas—serious and ridiculous—as you like. The PCs can participate and make DC 18 Diplomacy checks to champion their choices. If this happens, the first PC to achieve three successes convinces the Coalition to vote on his or her name choice. Amyria favors something dramatic and themed along the lines of her deity, such as the Platinum Shield Coalition or the Order of Heaven's Fang. Failure means only that the Coalition continues with their current neutral identity, but within a week, Caliandra leaves the group, citing her lack of faith in the group's ability to accomplish "anything of significance." Three days later, she is back, tearfully recounting the slaughter of five of the tribes (nearly 1,000 warriors and their families) under her leadership at the hands of githyanki strike teams.

Investigate Telicanthus: If the PCs successfully convince the Coalition to investigate the githyanki merchant, Amyria is tasked with overseeing the investigation. This means, as described under Amyria's Dream, that even if the characters fail the overall skill challenge and do not receive the Coalition's sanction for future missions, they will be asked by Amyria to look into the githyanki's activities. Failure at this goal also changes little. Amyria still wants to know if Telicanthus represents her spider. Personally, having asked around about the merchant, she feels he's little more than a fop, but might be providing sanctuary to other githyanki or their agents.

What it Means to Succeed

The PCs have the Coalition's blessing, and they are each provided with papers, which they can choose to carry or not, that give the bearer the authority to act on behalf of the new organization. This, of course, carries more weight if the characters succeed in more of Amyria's goals. At the very least, Lord Torrance's name on the papers might give the PCs inroads in Sayre.

What it Means to Fail

Failing the overall skill challenge means the Coalition might adopt one or more of Amyria's goals, but the respective leaders leave Sayre in three days for their homes. A week later, attacks against Caliandra's tribes, several villages near Sherrbyr, and several communities on Fariex's trade routes are attacked by githyanki. Over 40,000 civilians are killed, and the Coalition quickly reforms with more resolve than before.

SC3: Telicanthus's Tea Party

Encounter Level 12 (1,400 XP)

Setup

This skill challenge should be as drawn out as you feel your group would prefer. Some will want to get straight to the skill checks. Some will want to linger with the other guests and catch up on city gossip.

The tea party takes place in areas M1 through M9 (see pages 66-68 for complete descriptions of these areas). All other doors are closed. These doors are not locked unless listed as such in their descriptions.

When the PCs settle into the task of actually digging around, looking into Telicanthus's contacts and his home, the skill challenge starts. Begin by reading the following:

You've just walked into one of the most magnificent homes you've ever seen. Ornate stained glass fills almost every window, and expensive furnishings decorate the space. The lord of the house—the githyanki Telicanthus—is there to greet you, hands outstretched. "Welcome to my humble home! Please, feel free to enjoy the house and meet my other guests."

In this skill challenge, the already suspicious characters take the opportunity afforded by Telicanthus's invitation to learn more about the githyanki's activities in Sayre.

Telicanthus's Tea Party **Level 12**
Skill Challenge 1,400 XP

You've been invited to the home of Sayre's most prominent—and notorious—citizen. Now that you're in his home, you have the chance to rub shoulders with some of the city's most sophisticated guests, and dig up some dirt on Telicanthus in the process.

The party attempts to find out what, if anything, Telicanthus is up to.

Complexity
2 (6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills
Bluff, Diplomacy, Dungeoneering, Stealth

Secondary Skills
Heal, Insight, Thievery

Victory
The party learns about the excavation under Telicanthus's home, and learns how Telicanthus accesses this portion of the Sayre undercity.

Defeat
The party doesn't know anything about the excavation, but learns the next morning from Amyria about suspicious activity and the remote sounds of digging near the back of the mansion. Telicanthus learns that Amyria suspects him, and has alerted the githyanki workers in the excavation site. They post guards and cannot be caught unawares in encounters U4 or U5.

Bluff
DC 10 A successful check indicates the character spots General Taramin standing alone in the portrait gallery, casually examining Telicanthus's family tree. Engaging in meaningless small talk, the character learns that General Taramin was asked, as a personal favor, to leave his watch patrols away from the mansion, since their presence was "a distraction to my work."

Diplomacy
DC 21 The character happens on Lord and Lady Torrance in the Tea Room. With a successful check, the PC manages through veiled language to convince Lord Torrance that the adventurers will use discretion in their investigation. Assured of their capabilities, Lord Torrance gives a hint of a nod in the direction of Pennel, who is openly staring the character down from across the room. When Lord Torrance sees the PC notice Pennel, he gives a slight nod and moves away. A successful DC 15 Insight check indicates the PC knows that he should investigate Pennel further, perhaps in his chambers in the mansion.

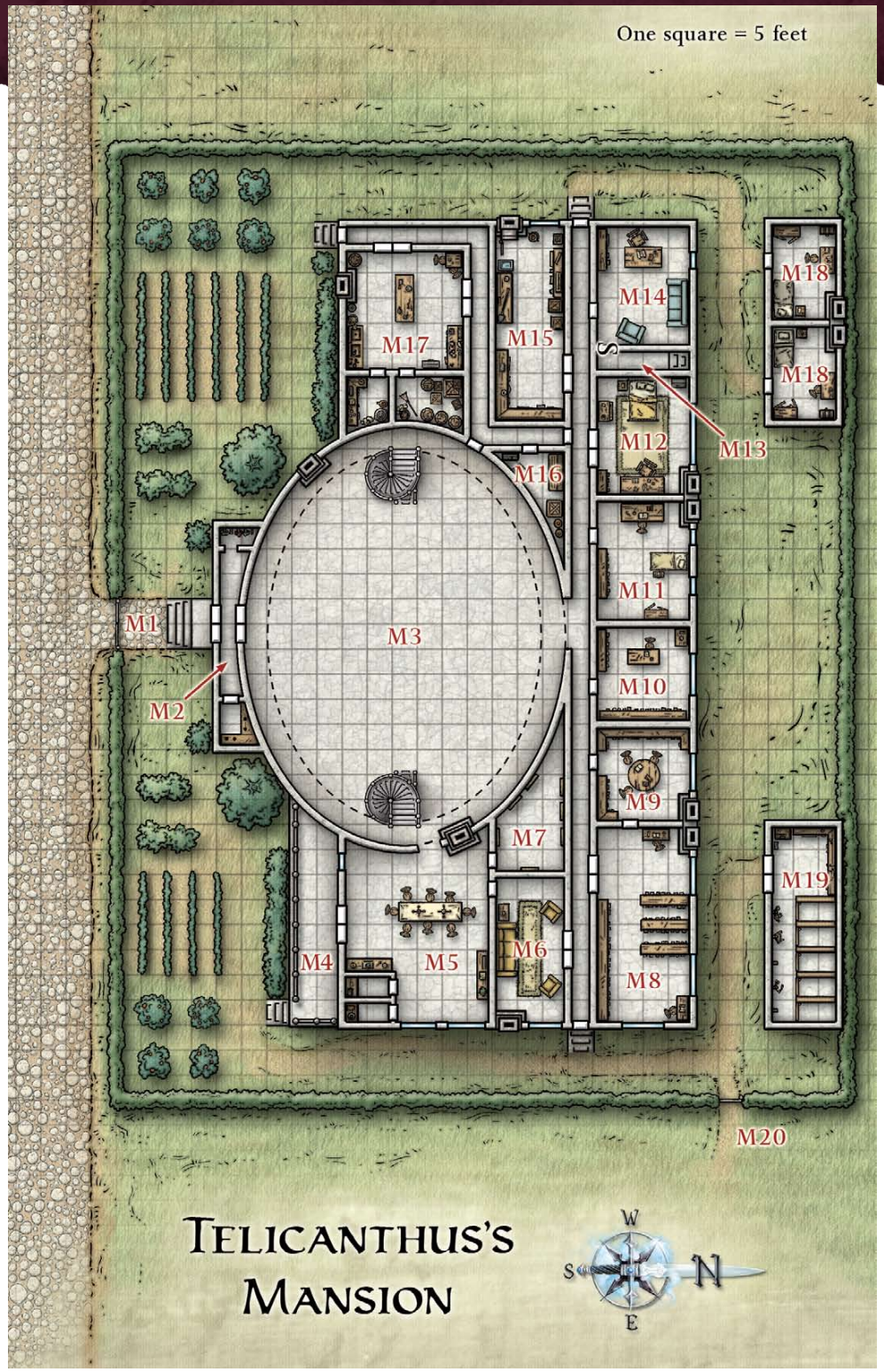
Dungeoneering
DC 16 The character notices that, near the back of the house on the ground floor, the floor feels extra creaky, indicating something is happening near the foundation at that back portion of the property.

Stealth
DC 21 With a successful Stealth check, the character is able to slip away and investigate one room not part of the normal tea party (areas M10 to M20). See pages 68-69 for descriptions of these areas and what a character can find in them.

Heal
DC 10 The PC comes across the nearly deaf Baranor the Black sitting alone in a chair in the Great Hall. His face is contorted in a grimace of discomfort as he rubs his left knee. A successful check allows a PC to diagnose the problem with Baranor's knee and prescribe an effective herbal remedy.
In his gratitude, he rambles on about his days as an adventurer, comparing his benefactor to his old cleric friend "Goldie." The real information Baranor provides is when he mentions the "earthquake" he felt a few nights back, and the few nights before that. He tells the PC he's complained to Lord Torrance, but neither he nor anyone else has felt them. The tremors were side effects of the excavations under Telicanthus's mansion. The deaf ex-adventurer felt them because he was able to ignore the distraction of his hearing. Based on his description, the PC can learn that the origin of the tremor was behind the mansion.

Insight
DC 16 The PC spots Archdean Grimaldi in a conversation with Telicanthus. The Archdean is agitated and asking something about food storage in the city. A successful check reveals that Telicanthus is surreptitiously looking around to see if anyone is paying attention to the conversation, and reassuring the Archdean at the same time. The Archdean concludes the exchange by looking pointedly at Telicanthus's kitchen and stores before walking off, seemingly pacified.

Thievery
DC 21 The PC spots Pennel pocket the key to his office. A successful check allows the character to snag the key out of Pennel's pocket as he passes by on an errand.



Development

Success at the skill challenge means the PCs should be clearly pointed to investigate Telicanthus's office. Slipping away isn't a problem. Once there, they should discover area M13 and the secret stairway to the excavation.

If the PCs are openly hostile to Telicanthus or question him about excavations, he lies smoothly, claiming that his "respected neighbor must be confused," if they bring up Baranor's comments. Lord Torrance is mortified and pulls the adventurers aside to ask them to leave. Telicanthus intercedes on their behalf, however, insisting they stay. He grandly states that he's "used to such suspicions because of the sins of his poor, deluded fellow githyanki," and that "he only hopes he can prove to the Heroes of Elsir Vale that he is unlike those creatures who seek to conquer and destroy." He's quite convincing in his denials, and short of attacking the githyanki, the PCs are left with little option other than find another way (such as by finding the Bitter Glass) to expose the powerful merchant.

U4: Sleeping Githyanki

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

Setup

4 githyanki warriors (W)
Githyanki mindslicer (M)

Telicanthus has three different groups of githyanki performing rituals inside of the Bitter Glass, as the ritual needs to occur continuously. This particular group of githyanki, unless they have a reason to expect danger (such as if the PCs failed the Telicanthus's Tea Party skill challenge), have not bothered to post a guard and can be easily surprised by a stealthy party.

The githyanki do their best to avoid being captured. Three of the githyanki warriors are sleeping when the characters arrive if they're not expecting trouble. They're not wearing armor (resulting in an AC of 20) and their weapons are lying near their bedrolls.

The mindslicer and another warrior are awake but fatigued, lost in their own thoughts. It is possible that the PCs will not notice the mindslicer immediately.

Read the following aloud:

You hear the faint sounds of breathing. The narrow tunnels open up into a larger intersection ahead, and you can see several shapes in the near darkness.

Allow the githyanki a Perception check to detect the approaching PCs, opposed by the characters' Stealth checks. Give all the characters a +5 bonus on their Stealth checks unless the githyanki are on alert. If the PCs are carrying open light sources, the githyanki get a +5 bonus on Perception checks to detect them.

Githyanki Mindslicer (M) **Level 13 Artillery (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid XP 800

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 98; Bloodied 49
AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *telekinetic leap*

⊕ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage.

Mindslice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +16 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage.

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.

Psychic Barrage (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Psychic**
Area burst 1 within 20; +16 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends), and the target can't use daily or encounter powers (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Arcana +14, History +11, Insight +12
Str 14 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 17 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+6)
Equipment robes, silver longsword

4 Githyanki Warriors (W) **Level 12 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid XP 700 each

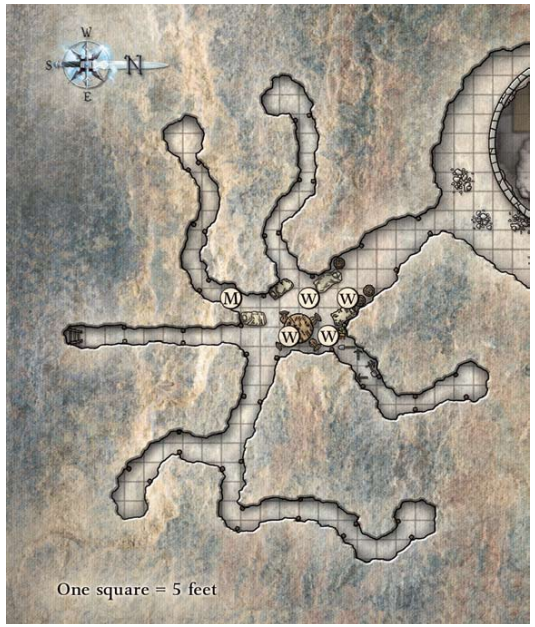
Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 118; **Bloodied** 59
AC 28 (or 20 without armor); **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic leap*

⊕ **Silver Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage plus 1d6 psychic damage, plus an extra 3d6 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.

Telekinetic Grasp (standard; sustain minor; encounter)
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills History +9, Insight +12
Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 17 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+7)
Equipment plate armor, silver greatsword



Tactics

The mindslicer leads with a *psychic barrage*. They githyanki fight defensively, trying to back toward area U5. If the fight goes poorly, the githyanki split into a different tunnels, hoping to separate the PCs. The warriors fight to the death, but see Development.

Features of the Area

Illumination: A shuttered lantern provides a dim light in this otherwise pitch black area.

Rubble: The tunnels are scattered with discarded pick axes and chunks of rubble.

Development

If the PCs are routing the warriors, the mindslicer tries to alert the githyanki at area U5. Two come and help, Kle'th alerts the githyanki in area U11, and the others defend the tower entrance at area U5. If Telicanthus is still alive, he is magically alerted by Kle'th.

U5: Leisure Time

Encounter Level 12 (3,700 XP)

Setup

3 githyanki warriors (W)
Githyanki mindslicer (M)
Kle'th, githyanki mindslicer (K)

These githyanki have recently completed their shift performing the ritual of the Bitter Glass. Still shaking somewhat from the psychic emanations they have successfully channeled and calmed, they are having a few drinks before they sleep. The five githyanki sit around a fire at the base of the shattered tower, discussing their boredom and Telicanthus's plan.

One of the githyanki looks considerably older than the others. This is Kle'th, the mindslicer sage who first learned of the existence of the Bitter Glass and who led the team in reconstructing it from ancient notes. He does not have the same warrior mindset that most githyanki have. He is a scholar at heart and would prefer to be in an astral library rather than a dark tunnel.

If the PCs approach undetected, read the following:

Firelight plays across the rough dirt and stone excavation. You hear the sound of voices ahead. Next to the remains of a shattered stone tower, you see five githyanki sitting around a fire and passing a bottle back and forth.

"How many more months?" asks an older one.

"Until this world is claimed," another one answers. "It won't be long."

If the githyanki have been warned of the adventurers' approach, read the following:

Firelight plays across the rough dirt and stone excavation. Several alert githyanki stand staring into the tunnel, and they give a shout of alarm when they see you approach.

Kle'th, Githyanki Mindslicer (K) Level 13 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid XP 800

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49
AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *telekinetic leap*

⊕ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage.

Mindslice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +16 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage.

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; Kle'th or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.

Unstable Balance (standard; encounter)
Area burst 3 within 20; +16 vs. Will; 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Psychic Barrage (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ Psychic
Area burst 1 within 20; +16 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends), and the target can't use daily or encounter powers (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Arcana +19, History +16, Insight +12
Str 14 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 17 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+6)
Equipment robes, silver longsword, communication glass linked to Telicanthus

Tactics

Once alerted, Kle'th tries to knock attackers prone before fleeing to warn Telicanthus and the githyanki performing the ritual inside the Bitter Glass. The other githyanki attack to the best of their ability, the mindslicer leading with *psychic barrage* as the warriors concentrate on one target at a time.

Githyanki Mindslicer (M) Level 13 Artillery (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid XP 800

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49
AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *telekinetic leap*

⊕ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage.

Mindslice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +16 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage.

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.

Psychic Barrage (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Psychic**
Area burst 1 within 20; +16 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends), and the target can't use daily or encounter powers (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Arcana +14, History +11, Insight +12
Str 14 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 17 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+6)
Equipment robes, silver longsword

3 Githyanki Warriors (W) Level 12 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid XP 700 each

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 118; **Bloodied** 59
AC 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic leap*

⊕ **Silver Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage plus 1d6 psychic damage, plus an extra 3d6 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.

Telekinetic Grasp (standard; sustain minor; encounter)
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills History +9, Insight +12
Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 17 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+7)
Equipment plate armor, silver greatsword

Features of the Area

Illumination: A small campfire illuminates the otherwise black tunnel, providing dim light.

Buildings: The remains of a wizard's tower, blackened and broken by ancient dragonfire, dominates the cave. The tunnel ceiling arches to over 15 feet (3 squares) high in this area.

Rubble: Piles of dirt and stone litter the area, creating squares of difficult terrain.

Development

If these githyanki have been alerted by the fighting in the tunnels, they are not sitting quietly. Two warriors have come to aid the sleeping githyanki in area U4, the third warrior and mindslicer defend this tower entrance, and Kle'th descends to the Bitter Glass warn the other githyanki. Kle'th also notifies Telicanthus using his communication glass.

U10: Inside the Glass

Encounter Level 12 (3,900 XP)

Setup

3 githyanki warriors (W)
Githyanki mindslicer (M)
Bitter Glass

The Bitter Glass is a 30-foot-diameter hollow sphere of blue stained glass. A glass bridge without railings spans the interior and provides a place to stand without touching the psionically charged walls of the sphere itself. This rebuilt version of the Bitter Glass is somewhat crude compared to the long-ago destroyed original, but Kle'th and Telicanthus have created a version that functions well enough to satisfy the githyanki's need for instant communication.

For the sphere to transmit communication, a constant ritual must be performed by creatures inside the sphere itself. Telicanthus has had teams of githyanki performing this ritual for months. The teams are both bored and exhausted, but they know that ceasing this ritual, even for a few seconds, creates a psychic backlash that can injure anyone inside the sphere (see below). They tell themselves that their actions are essential for their race's eventual success in conquering the mortal realm, and they have resigned themselves to the tedium. A fight against intruders is a welcome respite.

The Bitter Glass works as an effective communication device due to the ritual that Kle'th and his assistants have been performing in it around the clock. When the PCs attack and disrupt that ritual, it reverts to its old and imperfect functioning. Anyone near the globe is subjected to a babble of loud voices coming from all around them, echoing off the walls and disrupting concentration (see below).

When the PCs enter, read:

The door fades away when you touch it, and you're looking into a sphere full of blue light. Four githyanki stand on a narrow glass bridge, chanting as they obviously perform a ritual; their voices echoing strangely in the space. Psychic energy courses up and down the walls as they see you and their chanting halts for a second.

As soon as the ritual is disrupted, the Bitter Glass attacks as well (see below). The characters can make an Arcana check as soon as the Bitter Glass has attacked once, allowing the characters to know how to circumvent the damage from the device.

Arcana DC 23: *The psychic effect bombarding the room is emanating from the sphere itself. It can be suppressed temporarily with another Arcana check.*

Githyanki Mindslicer (M) **Level 13 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid XP 800

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49
AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24 (34 against the Bitter Glass)
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *telekinetic leap*

⊕ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage.

Mindslice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +16 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage.

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.

Psychic Barrage (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Psychic**
Area burst 1 within 20; +16 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends), and the target can't use daily or encounter powers (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Arcana +14, History +11, Insight +12
Str 14 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 17 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+6)
Equipment robes, silver longsword

3 Githyanki Warriors (W) **Level 12 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid XP 700 each

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 118; **Bloodied** 59
AC 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22 (32 against the Bitter Glass)
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic leap*

⊕ **Silver Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage plus 1d6 psychic damage, plus an extra 3d6 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.

Telekinetic Grasp (standard; sustain minor; encounter)
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills History +9, Insight +12
Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 17 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+7)
Equipment robes, silver greatsword

Tactics

The githyanki are unable to maintain the ritual while fighting, so they do their best to end the fight quickly. They work to bullrush PCs inside the sphere off the pathway, ganging up on one member at a time and dropping them before moving on to the next. While they fight, the psychic energy in the globe begins to take its toll on everyone in the chamber. The githyanki are somewhat resistant to the psychic backlash of the Bitter Glass. They receive a +10 bonus to their Will defense against attacks from the glass, as noted in their statistics.

All four githyanki (and Kle'th if present) do not hesitate to move out of the sphere to try and keep characters outside, especially if the PCs show intentions of attacking the sphere with the goal of destroying it. Any creature who does attack the inside of the sphere, which can be done only while inside

it or in one of the squares adjacent to one of the two portals into the Bitter Glass, becomes the immediate focus of the githyanki's attacks.

Bitter Glass	**Level 14 Blaster**
Hazard	1,000 XP

As the githyanki are forced to cease their ritual, a babbling backlash of psychic energy attacks your mind, causing an immediate and intense pain.

Initiative +12

Trigger

As soon as one githyanki stops performing the ritual, the Bitter Glass rolls initiative.

Special: A creature that touches the Bitter Glass's walls is subject to the attack, but is that attack's only target.

Attack

Standard Action **Close** burst 10 (centered in the center of the sphere)

Targets: Each creature in burst

Attack: +18 vs. Will

Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends), and the target is dazed until the end of the Bitter Glass's next turn.

Miss: Half damage.

Countermeasures

- ✦ *Arcana DC 21* (Standard Action) The character suppresses the glass's attack until the start of his or her next turn. However, each consecutive round this action is taken, the DC increases by 2.
- ✦ Dealing 200 points of damage to the inside of the Bitter Glass damages the panes of glass enough to shatter the inside of the device and render it permanently inoperable. Realizing that this is the only way to stop the psychic emanations of the glass requires a DC 23 Arcana check (a free action). The Bitter Glass's interior has AC 28, Fortitude 26, Reflex 24, Will 26, and is vulnerable 10 thunder.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright deep blue light, coming from the glowing stained glass sphere itself.

Bitter Glass Portals: The portals leading into the Bitter Glass open automatically when a creature stands adjacent to them. Otherwise, they remain closed. They can also be mentally commanded to close (a free action) by a creature adjacent to a portal, something the githyanki make sure to do while defending the sphere.

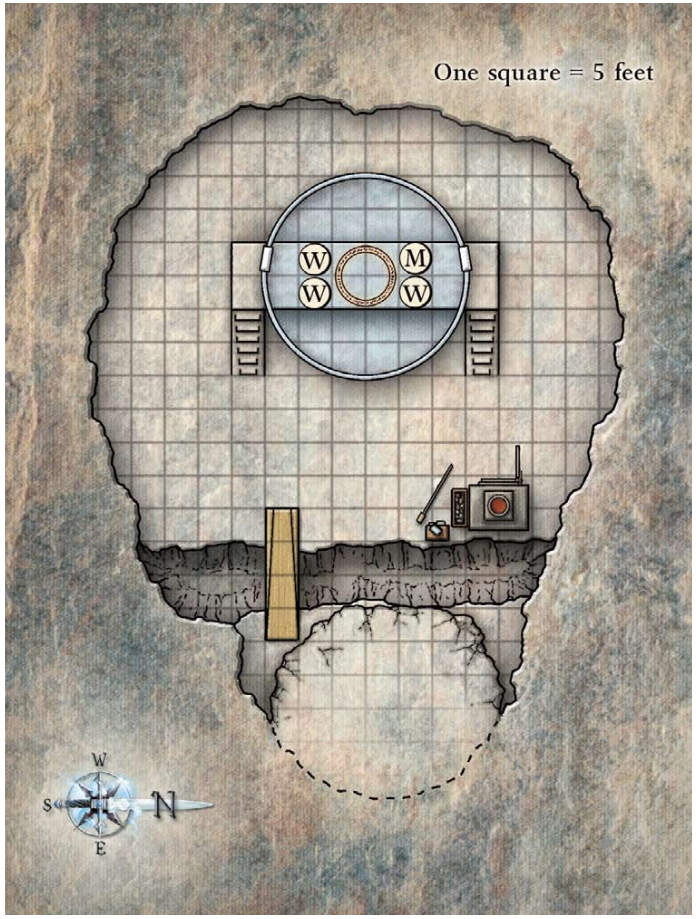
Bitter Glass Surface: The sloped sides of the sphere are rough, requiring DC 20 Athletics checks to climb.

Walkway: The glass bridge through the Bitter Glass is 2 squares wide and 6 squares long, suspended 15 feet above the bottom of the sphere. It lacks a railing.

Development

If Kle'th fled from area U5, he is also encountered here. He fights to the death at the Bitter Glass, unwilling to give up his life's greatest work for anything.

When the glass is destroyed, one final pulse of psychic energy surges through the chamber. The pulse doesn't deal any damage, but each character can feel some portion of his or her thoughts carried away by the energy. A DC 23 Arcana check reveals that each PC has had some portion of his or thoughts ripped into the Astral Sea, where some creature or another might find it. Feel free to use this in a future adventure, as you see fit. After all, what are the odds some creature finds the residue of a single creature's thoughts in the vastness of the Astral Sea?



Z1: Exposing Telicanthus

Encounter Level 16 (7,100 XP)

Setup

Telicanthus
Pennel
2 githyanki mindslicers
4 githyanki myrmidons

This encounter occurs wherever the PCs decide to confront Telicanthus and his secretary Pennel. Telicanthus is an active adversary who is careful not to get in a fight anywhere where doing so would tarnish his public image. For that reason, he is more likely to retreat from a fight in public, particularly if he can later pin any property damage on the heroes to get them arrested or exiled from the city.

This changes if the Bitter Glass has been destroyed. Once that happens, Telicanthus has no more reason to keep up his front, and will doubtlessly attempt to take his revenge on the characters. When Telicanthus finally decides to remove the heroes from action, he and his secretary Pennel attack.

At heart, however, Telicanthus is overconfident. While he tries not to let it show, he believes that he is a superior creature, and that he does his enemies a favor by gracing them with his presence. Even while being attacked, he quietly congratulates himself for allowing the PCs to fight a foe of his caliber. This would make him insufferable if his true attitude were known, so he carefully conceals it when dealing with the people of Sayre. His ego comes through when he is angry, however, which is the case if the Bitter Glass is destroyed.

Telicanthus's secretary Pennel is a very different sort of person. Pennel is human and appears as bland as dishwater: neat pale clothing, pale hair, pale eyes, extremely efficient, eidetic memory, and no talent for small talk. Under Telicanthus's employment and careful psychic grooming, his natural sociopathic tendencies have been honed to a wicked edge.

When the PCs decide to confront Telicanthus, it's likely to be at his mansion. But feel free to allow them to find the githyanki anywhere in the city that they choose. With the evidence they have (the Filth King's confession, the Bitter Glass beneath his home, and the many githyanki clearly in his employ), they do so with the blessing of Lord Torrance and the Coalition. The governor accompanies the characters to confront Telicanthus with a squad of four city militia, but they stay out of any ensuing conflict.

The characters have some time before confronting Telicanthus—at least enough for an extended rest. If they wait more than 24 hours before seeking him out, however, he sends Pennel to murder several prominent citizens in the city before fleeing. In that case, the characters find nothing but a burning mansion when they seek out the githyanki with their accusations.

Telicanthus	**Level 16 Elite Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid, githyanki	XP 2,800
Initiative +13	**Senses** Perception +11
Deathless Fanaticism aura 5; when a lower-level ally within the aura is reduced to 0 hit points, it dies if damaged again or at the end of its next turn—whichever comes first.	
HP 308; **Bloodied** 154	
AC 30; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 30	
Saving Throws +2; +4 against charm and fear effects	
Speed 6, fly 6 (clumsy)	
Action Points 1	
⨭/⨭ **Mindhammer** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**	
Reach 2 or Ranged 10; +20 vs. Will; 2d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is slowed until the end of Telecanthus's next turn and pushed 2 squares.	
⨭/⨭ **Double Hammering** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**	
Telicanthus makes two *mindhammer* attacks.	
⨭ **Force Switch** (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Force**	
Reach 4; targets two creatures; + 20 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 5 force damage, and the targets switch places. Telicanthus's allies take no damage from this attack.	
⨭ **Suffering Ties** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Psychic**	
+20 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 7 psychic damage, and until the start of Telicanthus's next turn, attacks that hit Telicanthus deal half damage to Telicanthus and half to the target. Nondamaging effects such attacks impose affect the target instead. Any healing the target gains is halved between the target and Telicanthus.	
⨭ **Binding Suggestions** (standard; recharge 6 after being first bloodied) ✦ **Psychic**	
Close burst 2; targets enemies; +18 vs. Will; the target is dazed (save ends). Each turn the target starts dazed, Telecanthus can make a secondary attack against that target.	
Secondary Attack: +20 vs. Will; the target takes 7 psychic damage and is dominated (save ends). *Miss:* The target takes 2d6 + 7 psychic damage.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Bluff +23, Diplomacy +23, Insight +17	
Str 12 (+9)	**Dex** 17 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+12)
Con 18 (+12)	**Int** 21 (+13) **Cha** 24 (+15)
Equipment robes	

Pennel **Level 14 Elite Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 2,000

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +17
HP 276; **Bloodied** 138
AC 30; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6
Action Points 1

⊕ **Crystal Dagger** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+21 vs. AC; 3d4 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is marked until the end of Pennel's next turn.

Crystal Strands (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
Ranged 10; +19 vs. Reflex; 3d4 + 7 damage, and the target is pulled 3 squares.

⊕/ **Crystal Bloom** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
Pennel makes two basic attacks.

⊕/ **Cut Off** (immediate interrupt; usable when a target Pennel has marked leaves a square adjacent to Pennel or enters a square adjacent to Telicanthus; at-will)
Pennel can make a basic attack against the target. If the attack hits, the target's movement ends.

Crystal Shards (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ✦ **Psychic**
Close burst 3; +18 vs. Reflex. 2d4 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). *Miss:* Half damage, and the target is slowed until the end of Pennel's next turn.

Psychic Redirection (immediate interrupt; useable when an attack hits Telicanthus; at-will)
Pennel redirects the triggering attack to himself.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Acrobatics +18, Insight +17, Stealth +18, Thievery +18
Str 15 (+12) **Dex** 23 (+13) **Wis** 20 (+12)
Con 18 (+11) **Int** 17 (+10) **Cha** 12 (+8)
Equipment robes, crystal dagger, schedule book

2 Githyanki Mindslicers **Level 13 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid XP 800 each

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +12
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49
AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24 (34 against the Bitter Glass)
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects
Speed 6; see also *telekinetic leap*

⊕ **Silver Longsword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage.

Mindslice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +16 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage.

Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)
Ranged 10; the githyanki mindslicer or an ally within range can fly up to 5 squares.

Psychic Barrage (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Psychic**
Area burst 1 within 20; +16 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends), and the target can't use daily or encounter powers (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Arcana +14, History +11, Insight +12
Str 14 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 17 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+6)
Equipment robes, silver longsword

4 Githyanki Myrmidons **Level 12 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid XP 175 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion
AC 28; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24
Speed 5

⊕ **Silver Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**
+19 vs. AC; 7 damage, plus an extra 5 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.

Telekinetic Grasp (standard; encounter)
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 16 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 12 (+7) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 10 (+6)
Equipment chainmail, silver short sword

Tactics

Pennel absorbs as much damage as possible for Telicanthus until his master decides to escape; once he does, Pennel attempts to slow and delay the attackers while Telicanthus flees for his life. Pennel gladly gives his life if it means that Telicanthus is able to reach safety.

Telicanthus will not fight if doing so might harm his reputation and social status. Once he joins a combat, he uses every power possible to confuse and annoy his opponents. He would much rather humiliate someone than hurt them. Once he is bloodied, he focuses on fleeing the scene and extracting vengeance at a later date. Telicanthus has no problems whatsoever with sacrificing Pennel.

Appendix 1: New Monsters

For more on githyanki, see *Monster Manual*, page 128.

Githyanki Lancer

Githyanki lancers are specially trained githyanki who ride war-dragons into combat. From dragon-back, they use *force lance* to skewer any foe who opposes them.

Githyanki Lancers (G)	**Level 14 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 1,000 each
Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +10	
HP 134; **Bloodied** 67	
AC 28; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25	
Saving Throws +2 against charm effects	
Speed 5; also see *telekinetic tether*	
Psychic Lance (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**	
Reach 2; +19 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 psychic damage, and if the githyanki lancer charged, the target is pushed 2 squares.	
Silver Longsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage plus 1d8 psychic damage, and the githyanki lancer or its mount can shift 1 square.	
Mindslice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**	
Ranged 10; +17 vs. Will; 2d8 + 5 psychic damage.	
Telekinetic Tether (move or immediate reaction when falling; encounter)	
The githyanki lancer can fly up to 10 squares, fly back to its mount's saddle, or fall to the ground without taking falling damage.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech	
Skills Acrobatics +16	
Str 19 (+11) **Dex** 18 (+11) **Wis** 16 (+10)	
Con 14 (+9) **Int** 15 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+7)	
Equipment scale armor, silver longsword	

Githyanki Lancer Tactics

A githyanki lancer prefers to fly into battle on its mount, charging with *psychic lance* to keep foes off balance and out of retaliating range so the githyanki can more easily *skirmish*. The lancer does not dismount until the battle is clearly over or forced to do so. In the latter case, *telekinetic tether* might keep the lancer in the saddle or at least see it safely to the ground. A githyanki lancer uses *mindslice* while its mount is maneuvering or its foes are otherwise out of reach.

Githyanki Captain

Githyanki captains lead vast numbers of warriors and myrmidons into battle.

Githyanki Captain	**Level 13 Elite Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 1,600
Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +10	
HP 256; **Bloodied** 128	
AC 29; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 25	
Saving Throws +2, +4 against charm effects	
Speed 5; also see *astral engagement* and *telekinetic leap*	
Action Points 1	
Silver Greatsword (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+18 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage plus 1d10 psychic damage, plus an extra 2d10 psychic damage against an immobilized target.	
Mindhook (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**	
Ranged 10; +17 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage, and the githyanki captain or an ally of the captain's choice marks the target (save ends).	
Double Attack (standard; at-will)	
The githyanki captain makes two basic attacks.	
Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)	
Ranged 10; the githyanki captain or an ally within range can fly up to 8 squares.	
Psychic Upheaval (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ✦ **Psychic**	
Close burst 3; targets enemies; +16 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 4 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). Allies within the area gain 10 temporary hit points.	
Astral Engagement (move; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Teleportation**	
The captain teleports 6 squares to a square adjacent to an enemy, and one ally within 5 squares of the captain's start or end point can charge the same enemy.	
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech	
Skills: Arcana +15, History +17	
Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 12 (+7) **Wis** 19 (+10)	
Con 16 (+9) **Int** 18 (+10) **Cha** 16 (+9)	
Equipment: plate armor, silver greatsword, Bitter Glass communication device	

Githyanki Captain Tactics

A githyanki captain fiercely leads from the front, entering the fray with *astral engagement* and pinning enemies down with *psychic upheaval*. The captain then cuts down immobilized foes, or designates targets with *mindhook* or a recharged *astral engagement*. When an opponent bloodies the captain, the captain prefers to attack that enemy, using *astral engagement* (if possible) or *telekinetic leap*, followed by *psychic upheaval*. If the enemy is immobilized, the captain the uses an action point to double attack the same adversary.

Githyanki Dragonknight

Githyanki dragonknights are elite warriors trained to use their pact dragons to devastate their foes.

Githyanki Dragonknight	**Level 14 Elite Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 2,000
Initiative +16	**Senses** Perception +11
HP 272; **Bloodied** 136	
AC 28; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26	
Saving Throws +2; +4 against charm effects	
Speed 5; see also *telekinetic tether*	
Action Points 1	
ⓘ **Psychic Lance** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**	
Reach 2; +19 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 psychic damage, and if the githyanki dragonknight charged, the target is pushed 2 squares.	
ⓘ **Silver Bastard Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+19 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage plus 1d10 psychic damage, and the dragonknight or its mount can shift 2 squares.	
ⓘ **Mindslice** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**	
Ranged 10; +17 vs. Will; 2d8 + 3 psychic damage.	
Knightly Prowess (standard; at-will)	
The githyanki dragonknight can make two basic attacks. If the dragonknight charged and made a *psychic lance* attack, the dragonknight or its mount can instead shift 2 squares, then the dragonknight makes a *silver longsword* attack.	
Hatred's Juggernaut (standard; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Psychic**	
Reach 2; the githyanki dragonknight moves up to it or its mount's speed, making a *psychic lance* against any enemy that comes within reach.	
Telekinetic Tether (move or immediate reaction when falling; encounter)	
The githyanki dragonknight can fly up to 12 squares, fly back to its mount's saddle, or fall to the ground without taking falling damage.	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Skills Athletics, Acrobatics	
Str 21 (+12)	**Dex** 20 (+12) **Wis** 18 (+11)
Con 16 (+10)	**Int** 16 (+10) **Cha** 14 (+9)
Equipment scale armor, silver longsword, overcoat	

Githyanki Dragonknight Tactics

A githyanki dragonknight flies into battle initially with *hatred's juggernaut*. It goes on with savage displays of *knightly prowess*, mixing attacks to bring down as many foes as possible. The knight uses its action point to finish off a foe in dramatic fashion, to unleash a mount's attack (such as a breath weapon), or to follow up the end of *hatred's juggernaut* with a series of attacks on a particular enemy.

Githyanki Myrmidons

Githyanki myrmidons are selected from githyanki that were unsuited for full warrior training. They are taught to follow orders without question, surging forward against the enemy, mobbing their foes and never retreating.

Githyanki Myrmidon	**Level 12 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 175 each
Initiative +12	**Senses** Perception +9
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	
AC 28; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24	
Speed 5	
ⓘ **Silver Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic, Weapon**	
+19 vs. AC; 7 damage, plus an extra 5 psychic damage if the target is immobilized.	
Telekinetic Grasp (standard; encounter)	
Ranged 5; Medium or smaller target; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).	
Alignment Chaotic evil	**Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Str 16 (+9)	**Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 12 (+7)	**Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 10 (+6)
Equipment chainmail, silver short sword	

Githyanki Myrmidon Tactics

Myrmidons work to aid one another and their superiors. Part of the squad uses *telekinetic grasp* while the others focus attacks on immobilized targets. Then they switch roles.

Githyanki Lore

In addition to the information given in the *Monster Manual*, a character knows the following information with a successful Nature check.

DC 20: Githyanki armed forces contain a number of different warriors. Lancers are specially trained githyanki who ride draconic mounts, and those who excel in this role become githyanki knights. Leading squads are captains, who use their psychic powers to tie up foes and take them apart. Lowliest among githyanki military forces are the myrmidons, who throw themselves at githyanki enemies.

Laughing Shadows

The Laughing Shadows are a primarily human mercenary company always willing to hire their services to the highest bidder. They specialize in duplicitous assignments, frequently posing as something they're not.

Laughing Shadow Groveler

These members of the Laughing Shadows specialize in appearing weak and helpless, setting up their foes for attacks by the groveler's allies.

Laughing Shadow Groveler (G) **Level 13 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 800

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 103; **Bloodied** 51
AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25; +2 to all defenses against marked enemies
Speed 7

⊕ **Katar** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage (crit 18 + 2d6).

↛ **Shuriken** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 6/12; +18 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage.

⊕/↛ **Covert Attack** (immediate reaction; when an ally attacks an enemy the ally has marked because of *cringe*; requires katar or shuriken; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Targets the enemy the triggering ally attacked; the groveler makes a katar attack against an adjacent enemy or a shuriken attack against a nonadjacent enemy. *Hit:* 4d6 + 6 damage (with katar, crit 30 damage + 2d6).

Cringe (standard; requires an ally in the area; at-will)
Close burst 10; the groveler chooses up to one ally in the area per enemy in the area. The enemy is considered to be marked by the chosen ally until the end of the groveler's next turn. Each ally can mark only one enemy in this way. The groveler gains +2 to all defenses against marked enemies.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff+16, Stealth +15
Str 12 (+7) **Dex** 22 (+10) **Wis** 17 (+9)
Con 19 (+10) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 20 (+11)
Equipment leather armor, katar, 10 shuriken, beggar's garb

Groveler Tactics

A groveler begins combat, if possible, with cringe, setting up his enemies for attacks by his allies. Grovelers are never encountered without other Laughing Shadows or similar allies, typically streetfighters. Once enemies are marked, the groveler uses covert attack whenever possible to devastate persistent attackers.

Laughing Shadow Streetfighter

Some members of the laughing shadows have learned the down-and-dirty, ruthless fighting style of the streets. These rough and scarred mercenaries use whatever weapon is at hand, and don't shy away from low tactics to win.

Laughing Shadow Streetfighter **Level 13 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 800 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 128; **Bloodied** 64
AC 29; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24
Speed 6

⊕ **Katar** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+20 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage (crit 18 + 1d6), and the target is slowed until the end of the streetfighter's next turn.

↛ **Shuriken** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 6/12; +19 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 damage.

⊕ **Cheap Shot** (immediate interrupt; usable when a slowed target leaves an adjacent square; requires katar; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+20 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target's movement ends.

Streetfighter Flourish (standard; requires katar; recharge ⚄ ⚅)
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +19 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Bluff+13, Intimidate +13, Stealth +15
Str 21 (+11) **Dex** 19 (+10) **Wis** 17 (+9)
Con 16 (+9) **Int** 11 (+6) **Cha** 10 (+8)
Equipment chainmail, katar, 10 shuriken, beggar's garb

Streetfighter Tactics

Streetfighters train to move quickly among foes, unwary or otherwise, and tangle up the battlefield. A streetfighter starts out with the showy *streetfighteer's flourish* to keep enemies close at hand. Then the streetfighter attacks and marks foes to make later use of *cheap shot* if those opponents move away.

Laughing Shadow Scrabbler

Laughing Shadow scrabblers dart in and out of combat, seeking weakness in their foes.

Laughing Shadow Scrabbler **Level 13 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 200 each

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion
AC 27; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 24
Speed 6

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 8 damage, and the scrabbler can shift 2 squares, ignoring difficult terrain.

↛ **Shuriken** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
Ranged 6/12; +18 vs. AC; 7 damage.

Combat Advantage
The scrabbler deals an extra 5 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Bluff+10, Stealth +15
Str 19 (+10) **Dex** 18 (+10) **Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 10 (+6) **Cha** 8 (+5)
Equipment chainmail, short sword, 10 shuriken, beggar's garb

Scrabbler Tactics

A scrabbler circles the combat, looking for opportunities to gain combat advantage while throwing shuriken.

Laughing Shadow Sentry

These vigilant sentries are adroit at posing as less competent household guards or city militia.

Laughing Shadow Sentry	Level 11 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 600
Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +13	
HP 47; **Bloodied** 23	
AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23	
Speed 5	
(+) **Halberd** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d10 + 4 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the sentry's next turn.	
↓ **Halberd Sweep** (immediate interrupt; usable when a target the sentry has marked leaves a square within reach; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Reach 2; +16 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target's movement ends and it slides 2 squares.	
↓ **Halberd Trip** (standard; requires halberd; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d10 + 4 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
Crossbow (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**	
Ranged 15/30; +16 vs. AC; 2d8 + 2 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Draconic	
Skills Streetwise +11	
Str 18 (+9) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 16 (+8)	
Con 16 (+8) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 13 (+6)	
Equipment scale armor, halberd, crossbow with 20 bolts	

Sentry Tactics

Laughing Shadow sentries work together like a well-oiled machine. A sentry will attempt to stay at reach, using halberd trip to keep a foe prone and setting up an attack from an ally who will gain combat advantage against the now-prone target.

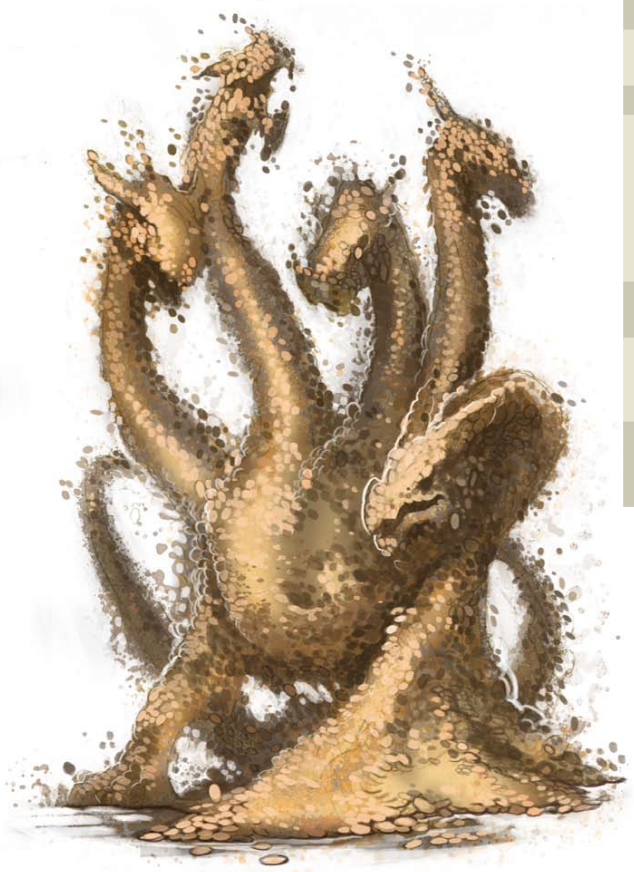
Laughing Shadow Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Nature check.

DC 20: The Laughing Shadows are a large, organized mercenary company that specializes in missions in urban environments. Each member carefully learns to be able to blend in to whatever city or town in which they are assigned. They are experts at meshing seemlessly with other locals, whether as beggars or city militia.

Treasure Golem

This golem is a treasure guardian, made up of that which it guards—shifting baubles, items, and coins.



Treasure Golem (G)	Level 14 Solo Brute
Large natural animate (construct)	XP 5,000
Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision, tremorsense 5	
HP 700; **Bloodied** 350; see also *berserk attack*	
AC 26; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23	
Immune disease, poison	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 6; can't shift	
Action Points 2	
(+) **Slam** (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d10 + 6 damage, and the target slides 2 squares or is knocked prone.	
Gleamshard (standard; at-will) ✦ **Force**	
Ranged 20; +26 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 force damage, and the target slides 2 squares or is knocked prone.	
↓ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)	
The treasure golem makes two basic attacks.	
↓ **Berserk Attacks** (immediate reaction; usable when damaged by an attack while bloodied; at-will)	
The treasure golem makes two basic attacks against random targets.	
Hoard Blast (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅)	
Close burst 3; +22 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 7 damage, and prone targets cannot stand until the end of the golem's next turn. *Miss:* Half damage. *Effect:* The golem bursts into its component pieces, filling the area and gaining insubstantial until the start of its next turn, when it reappears within 5 squares of its last space.	
Weight of Greed (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ✦ **Psychic**	
Close burst 3; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is dominated until the end of the golem's next turn. *Miss:* Half damage.	
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –	
Str 22 (+13) **Dex** 10 (+7) **Wis** 8 (+6)	
Con 25 (+13) **Int** 3 (+3) **Cha** 3 (+3)	

Treasure Golem Tactics

A treasure golem unleashes *weight of greed* on its enemies, then uses an action point to attack and knock a couple foes prone. On its next turn, it uses *hoard blast*. It then resorts to double attack until *hoard blast* or *weight of greed* recharges. It moves as it needs

to, without regard for opportunity attacks, focusing on targets that damaged it most recently or those who have damaged it most. When bloodied, it becomes less careful, not more.

Treasure Golem Lore

A character knows the following information on a successful Arcana or Religion check.

DC 20: The secrets to creating a treasure golem are occasionally granted to those who worship the Tiamat or Avandra. Wizards and other arcanists have also devised similar techniques, based on the religious techniques. Proper rites make a hoard of treasure into its own guardian. The magic also makes the treasure useless for spending until the monster it comprises is slain.

Bone Sage

Bone sages are remnants of evil academics and scribes, lingering in their thirst for knowledge.

Bone Scribe		**Level 13 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 200 each
Initiative +9	**Senses** Perception +11; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 27; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 24		
Immune disease		
Speed 7		
ⓣ **Mind Touch** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**		
+16 vs. Will; 4 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to Will and is slowed until the end of the bone scribe's next turn. The bone scribe can shift 1 square.		
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common	
Str 10 (+10)	**Dex** 14 (+9)	**Wis** 8 (+6)
Con 20 (+11)	**Int** 23 (+12)	**Cha** 19 (+10)

Bone Archivists		**Level 14 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 1,000 each
Initiative +9	**Senses** Perception +19; darkvision	
HP 109; **Bloodied** 54		
AC 26; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26		
Immune disease; **Resist** 10 psychic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant		
Speed 6		
ⓣ **Mind Touch** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**		
+19 vs. Will; 1d10 + 6 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to Will and is slowed until the end of the bone archivist's next turn. The bone archivist can shift 3 squares.		
ⓢ **Siphon Memory** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Psychic**		
Ranged 10; +19 vs. Will; 2d4 + 6 psychic damage, and the target can make only basic attacks or use at-will powers until the end of the bone archivist's next turn.		
✲ **Knowledge Barrage** (standard; encounter) ✦ **Psychic**		
Area burst 2 within 10; targets enemies; +17 vs. Will; 3d6 + 6 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).		
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common	
Str 12 (+8)	**Dex** 15 (+9)	**Wis** 10 (+7)
Con 19 (+12)	**Int** 23 (+13)	**Cha** 20 (+12)

Bone Sage Tactics

Eager for knowledge, the bone scribes move forward to attack while an archivist stays near the back of a combat. Bone scribes use their finger bones to scrape thoughts from the target's head. The archivist uses its *knowledge barrage* power first, to slow any retreat and knock strong foes off kilter. It then uses to *siphon memory,* until melee attackers force it to use mind touch. When the bone sages succeed on their attacks, memories from the target appear as words, etching themselves across the creature's papery skin.

Bone Scribe Lore

A character knows the following information on a successful Religion check.

DC 20: Bone scribes are undead who hunger for information. They attempt to rip it directly from their victims heads, before recording it elsewhere for posterity. These undead seldom stop until they have extracted every bit of information available, killing the target.

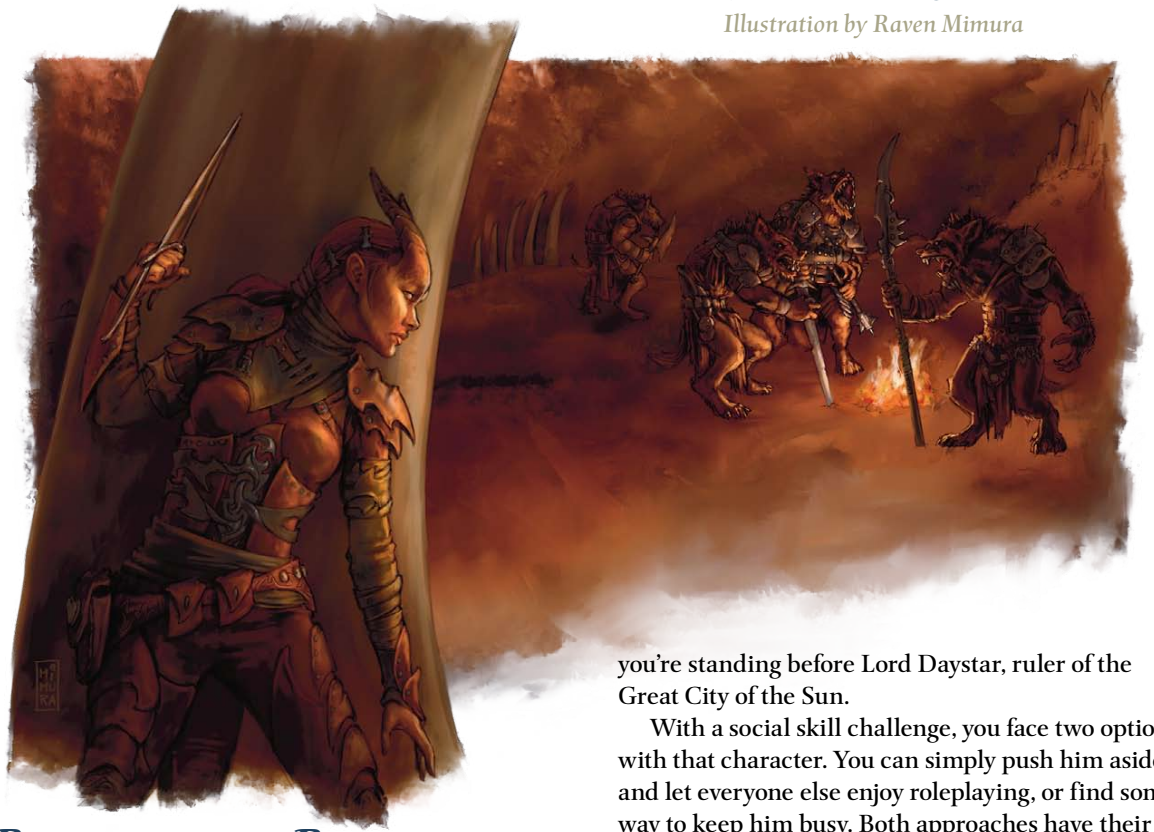
About the Author

In addition to helping run the D&D® fan site EN World (www.enworld.org), **Kevin Kulp** is a Boston-based writer and computer game designer.

Social Skill Challenges, Part 1

BY MIKE MEARLS

Illustration by Raven Mimura



Welcome to the fifth installment of Ruling Skill Challenges. In the first four columns, I walked you through the process of building a skill challenge. The last column gave an entire sample skill challenge, along with some design notes on it. I also asked you to send in requests for my next skill challenge design, and wow did a lot of you take me up on that offer!

The requests I received fell into three major categories: social situations, travel and exploration, and large scale, mass battles. I'm going to tackle each of these subjects, one after another, starting with social situations. I'll use two columns to go into each type in detail.

Also, I said I would take a proposed skill challenge and design it, but frankly I did not expect to see almost every, single suggestion fall into one of those three categories. Instead, I'm going to spend some time talking about style and approaches, then put together a challenge.

Elements of Social Style

There are a few things to keep in mind when designing a social skill challenge.

Bloodthirsty Barbarian Syndrome

Almost every group has a player who loves a fight. As a good friend of mine put it, "I love everything that happens in the dungeon. Once we leave that place, I'm bored!" A screaming, bloodthirsty barbarian/fighter/paladin/ranger is awesome when the hordes of the Nine Hells are upon you, but not so useful when you're standing before Lord Daystar, ruler of the Great City of the Sun.

With a social skill challenge, you face two options with that character. You can simply push him aside and let everyone else enjoy roleplaying, or find some way to keep him busy. Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages.

If you ignore the bloodthirsty character, the player might thank you. Let his character step out of the scene (perhaps the party leaves him at the inn) and aim for a complexity rating of 1, 2, or 3, so that the player doesn't spend all night watching. The one thing I have learned as a DM is that most players are fine with taking a scene off, but nobody likes being forced into something they don't want to do. If some of your

players really want to roleplay and others don't, don't be afraid to focus part of the adventure on one group or the other.

Such a player can keep busy in other ways during the scene. Maybe he can scour your rulebooks (or the D&D Compendium) for the perfect magic item to buy with his character's gold. Perhaps he can pick up food for dinner or get more snacks, taking care of an errand that might otherwise bring play to a halt. It's not the ideal solution, but for some players it's the right one.

Meanwhile, On the Other Side of Town

On the other hand, everyone is happier if you can find a way to keep the entire group engaged. This approach is a little tricky, but when it works, it pays off handsomely. The ideal solution is to come up with two subsets of skills and checks: one set for players who want to roleplay, and other set for the more action-minded characters. It isn't as hard as you think, once you get the hang of it. Here are some examples:

- The characters need to infiltrate a masquerade to steal a ritual book from a noble who worships Asmodeus. While a few of the characters attend the party, chat with the guests, and serve as a destruction, the rest sneak in through the back door, defeat a small group of guards, and break into the library. If the PCs fail the skill challenge, the noble and his men discover the theft in progress. The PCs at the party have to create a distraction, perhaps by winning the noble's trust, while the other PCs need to keep quiet and defeat the guards quickly.
- The PCs have been wrongly accused of a crime. A few of the PCs attend a hearing with the mayor, making their case and persuading her that the charges are false. Meanwhile, the rest of the party has a lead on the tiefling that framed them. They must track him down in the Thieves' Quarter, capture him, and drag him to the mayor in chains. If the PCs convince the mayor that they've been framed and deliver the tiefling to her, they clear their name.
- The PCs burst into the goblin lair. As the goblins draw their blades, one opens a secret door, tosses a bag of coins into the secret passage, and yells "Bree-yark!" An ogre mercenary who lives in the cave on the other side of the door steps into the room and says to the PCs, "Dah liddle guys pay me gud, but you mebbe got sumfin' bedder?" While the rest of the party battles the goblins, the PC or PCs who want to roleplay have a chance to neutralize a deadly foe and perhaps turn him into a temporary ally.

Many players who like roleplaying enjoy it for the sense of immersion it brings.

This approach answers the divide between bloodthirstiness and roleplaying by using a common technique from movies, novels, and comics: Split the party! It's a classic technique to show each character in his or her natural element, excelling without diminishing the rest of the session.

In addition, don't be afraid to use the lower complexity skill challenges to replace one or more monsters in a fight. That approach is satisfying because it places roleplay on even level with combat. While the fighter and the barbarian eviscerate a mob of spirit monsters, the wizard and the warlord talk down the druid who was tricked into summoning them to attack the village.

Alternatively, go ahead and create two, concurrent skill challenges for the party. That lets you tailor the challenge to each portion of the group. The paladin, the warlord, and the sorcerer lead the defense of the city's east gate against the attacking orcs. Meanwhile, the invoker and the rogue discuss strategy with the duke while trying to convince him that Count Barreth is a traitor. The key lies in making sure that the scenes complement each other. As long as the first group can hold the gate, the nobles have time to debate their next move. If the invoker and rogue succeed, the duke sends reinforcements to the gate rather than abandon the position. The PCs could fail one of the challenges, but their success elsewhere allows them to salvage at least some advantage. The gate falls, but the duke's men rush to counterattack and allow the defenders to withdraw in good order. The duke refuses to listen to reason, but the characters repel the attackers and allow a safe, orderly withdrawal rather than a panicked flight in the face of an orc horde.

Don't Break Immersion

Many players who like roleplaying enjoy it for the sense of immersion it brings. It's fun to take on the role of Larthus Silverstep, halfling spy and conman, dickering over the fate of the Carrastan Isles with the archdevil Pholstarm. If your group has ever dropped into in-character banter—each of the players portraying his or her character in an improvised scene—then you now how much fun that can be. As a DM, the best way to keep these players happy is to let them get lost in the moment. Jarring them out of a scene—whether with implausible outcomes, an intrusive appearance

by the rules, or a dramatic scene undercut by a die roll—is the surest way to lose them.

To these players, immersion glues a scene together and allows it to come to life. Breaking that immersion is like seeing a boom mic float down from the top of the screen during a TV show, or watching a science fiction movie in which it's painfully obvious that the "aliens" are stuntmen wearing gorilla suits. These types of events break the mood and remind you that you're watching a movie or playing a game. The players aren't bold adventurers in a world of fantasy, but players sitting around a table.

Immersion is a funny thing, in that it tends to arise naturally from the group's play style. As a DM, here are things you can do to help promote it.

- **Don't let the dice lose to drama.** The bard Quelda, played by Susan, delivers a speech rallying the lords of the wood to gather their armies and stand against the invading orcs. By the end of it, the players are clapping and you're ready to grab the broom you keep by your gaming table and rush out to clobber the nearest orc. At that point, let the dice stay on the table. Any fool can see that Quelda just delivered the speech the characters needed. A Diplomacy check at this point either confirms this or leads to a ridiculous outcome. Never, ever be afraid to leave the dice on the table in the face of a great roleplaying performance, especially if it's one that helps build the mood and draws the players into the scene.
- **Don't tell the players they're in a skill challenge.** Players who enjoy immersion hate it when they are forced to think in terms of rules, rather than in terms of what their characters want to do. Keep track of successes and failures, asking for skill checks as appropriate, and allow the challenge's results to play out naturally. The key to this approach is that the players don't think "I'm going to use Intimidate here." Instead, they roleplay an intimidating statement in response to your cues and descriptions, allowing a threat to play out naturally, just as if they were having a conversation with an NPC. Let them make the check after they speak.
- **Keep everything grounded in the narrative.** Skill checks, and their results, should flow smoothly in the course of play, building a logical and sensible series of events. Incoherent events are the bane of immersion. Let's say the PCs want to bribe a guard so he lets them into a quarantined section of the city. The challenge is over when the guard accepts the bribe. It would be ludicrous for him to take the cash and then expect the PCs to keep making checks to convince him. The key here lies in couching checks correctly. When the PCs go to hand the guard a bag of coins, a check lets the guard warm up to the bribe. He doesn't take it until the PCs succeed in the challenge. Up to that point, perhaps he vacillates, worrying that he's going to be caught and imprisoned, or maybe he tries to wring more cash out of the PCs. The PCs must talk him into taking the bribe, and at the amount they're offering.

Skill checks, and their results, should flow smoothly in the course of play, building a logical and sensible series of events.

Sample Skill Challenge: The Angry Druid

While traveling through the Nentir Vale, the characters are horrified to learn that Delarre, a human druid who watches over the Cloak Wood, sent a mob of plant monsters on a rampage against the folk of Winterhaven. Further investigation reveals that Gavros Hellthorn, a tiefling priest of Vecna, tricked Delarre into waging war on the town. Delarre believes that soldiers from Winterhaven burned down part of the Cloak Wood and killed several of his centaur allies. In truth, Gavros wants to turn the good folk of the vale against each other. The PCs discover Gavros' plot and must prevent Delarre from falling for this treachery.

The PCs manage to find Delarre in his sacred grove, a ring of trees that surround a stone infused with primal power. Delarre is in the grove along with his pet tangler beetle, a dire wolf, the ranger Shen (a longtooth hunter from the *Monster Manual*), the barbarian Thora (a human berserker from the *Monster Manual*). Delarre and his allies have gathered in a council of war. Thora and Shen both represent their tribes.

This sample skill challenge shows how you can combine roleplaying and combat to keep everyone happy. It is a complexity 1 skill challenge aimed at giving one or two players the chance to interact with Delarre while the rest of the party battles his allies. It's a good model to use if you have a few players who want roleplay while everyone else busts heads.

Using the Skill Challenge

The skill challenge begins when the fight starts. Shen and Thora are both hotheads who are spoiling for

a fight, so they draw weapons and strike when the PCs first arrive. The beetle and the wolf also join the battle.

Delarre, however, has misgivings. He does not attack until he is certain that he must fight the PCs. A hawk spoke to him of confusion and fear in the town, and he worries that he might have been duped. However, he does have a number of longstanding issues with the townsfolk. He has expected a confrontation for quite some time.

During the battle, Delarre makes no motion to attack. He leaves his staff leaning on a tree next to him and even cries out for his companions to stop. They pay him no heed.

Experience

This is a level 5, complexity 1 skill challenge. If the PCs succeed at it, they gain 200 XP. The PCs need 4 successes before 3 failures.

Primary Skills

This skill challenge features three primary skills. Note that this challenge is designed for one PC while the rest of the party fights.

Using a primary skill is a standard action in this encounter. The PCs cannot use the aid another action. They can use each skill once per round.

Diplomacy (DC 17): The PCs can try to calm Delarre, He particularly pays heed to calls for mercy, as they play on the guilt he feels. The PCs can use this skill twice.

Intimidate (DC 12): Cowing Delarre is a good option, since he worries that he might touch off a battle that he cannot overcome. The PCs can use this skill twice.

Nature (DC 12): Showing an understanding of nature paints the PCs as sympathetic to Delarre's cause. The PCs can use this skill twice.

Secondary Skills

This skill challenge has two secondary skills. Using a secondary skill is a minor action. The PCs cannot use the aid another action with secondary skills.

Insight (DC 17): A successful check reveals Delarre's lingering guilt. The PCs learn that he is more open to Intimidate than Diplomacy.

Religion (DC 12): A Religion check allows the PCs to point to evidence that shows that wights attacked the forest. If the PCs succeed, they gain a +5 bonus on their next Diplomacy check. If they fail, he accuses the townsfolk of recruiting undead. They suffer a –2 penalty to all checks until they succeed at a Diplomacy check in this challenge.

Other Events

The combat happening as the skill challenge progresses can also alter its outcome.

Fighting: While the PCs speak with Delarre, the fight rages around them. If the PCs drop a foe to 0 or fewer hit points and chose to knock the foe unconscious, they gain a +2 bonus to all skill checks made in the challenge. This bonus does not stack. For each foe they drop and kill outright, they suffer a –5 penalty to all checks in the challenge. This penalty does stack. Killing Delarre's friends is a good way to end any chance of a diplomatic solution.

Attacking Delarre

If the PCs attack Delarre, they accrue 2 failures for this skill challenge. He is willing to accept one such attack, provided they haven't already angered him, but a second attack leads to an automatic failure.

Success

If the PCs succeed, Delarre immediately orders his allies to stop fighting. They do so. His voice echoes across the forest, causing the trees to sway as if in a stiff breeze. Gavros's treachery enrages him. The PCs earn a powerful ally in their fight, a safe haven to rest, and a map to the cave where Delarre suspects Gavros is hiding.

The PCs receive XP for the skill challenge as wellas XP as if they defeated Delarre's friends in combat.

Failure

If the PCs fail, Delarre attacks them and fights to the death. Whenever they travel in or near the Cloak Wood, there is a chance (10+ on a d20) that they face an attack from wild beasts and fey creatures. The encounter should be equal to the party's level + 1d4. In addition, the PCs can find (Perception DC 12) Delarre's journal tucked in a backpack beneath a tree. The journal outlines Delarre's anger toward the village, but also mentions his distrust of Gavros and the threat he poses. A map shows the path to a cave in the Cairngorm Peaks where he suspects the priest makes his lair.

The PCs receive no XP, and it should be clear that they managed to kill a potentially useful ally.

Roleplaying Delarre

Bringing Delarre to life is a key to this skill challenge. He is a grizzled old man with a long, white beard and tangled hair. He wears simple robes and speaks like an Old Testament prophet, leveling harsh accusations against the PCs and speaking in archaic, almost grandiose terms. For instance, he's liable to say "Know that you have defiled this place with your mere presence, Outlanders!" Here are a few tips:

- Speak directly, issuing commandments and demands. Delarre is angry.
- Once the PCs have a 2 or more successes, Delarre's tone shifts to one of guilt and remorse. He muses aloud on the strange nature of the attack and wonders why the townsfolk were unprepared for an attack after sending their soldiers to burn his forest.
- He refers to the PCs as outlanders, his term for folk from outside the forest.
- If the PCs fail a check, he rebukes them and speaks of the various threats that the town poses to the forest. He points to an incident five years ago when some loggers clear cut several acres for wood to build a watch tower in town. Before that, a hunter slew Garthad, a unicorn that lived in the wood and was a good friend of his. On the final failure, he tells the PCs that he has no reason to speak with them. He bids that their souls find the afterlife in peace as he turns his back on civilization forevermore.

Encourage the PCs to speak to Delarre in character, then decide which skill check to call for based on their tone and dialogue. Forceful threats call for Intimidate, while calls for peace or reason fall back on Diplomacy. If the PCs try to trick him, make it clear that their ruses simply confuse Delarre or have no effect on his mood. He has no time or patience for anything fancy.

The shift in Delarre's tone is the key to showing the PCs they have made progress with him. You can go for an immersive environment by keeping the skill challenge under wraps, tracking success and failures without informing the PCs that they are in a challenge. As mentioned above, if a player does a particularly good job of roleplaying, give a bonus on skill checks or simply award a free success. In that case, be sure to make it crystal clear that Delarre is a good guy. Maybe they hear stories of how he once provided Winterhaven with food after a bad harvest, or how he used magic to call in centaur allies to help defeat a band of trolls. They should go in with the goal of figuring out why he attacked, rather than with an eye toward killing him.

If your Bloodthirsty Barbarians are particular kill crazy, it pays to tell them that there's a skill challenge taking place. That way, you avoid any issues with some players expecting a fight to the death and others looking forward to an encounter where roleplaying matters.

You can go for an immersive environment by keeping the skill challenge under wraps, tracking success and failures without informing the PCs that they are in a challenge.

Design Notes

The really nifty thing about low complexity skill challenges is that you can use them to replace one or two monsters in an encounter. At the same time, you're replacing a monster with an objective that dwarfs simply beating up the monsters. The PCs aren't in the forest to slay the druid. They are there to win a powerful ally.

Delarre's shift in attitude is a small but critical part of the challenge. As the PCs rack up successes and failures, Delarre should react appropriately. Your roleplaying cues should signal their progresses, rather than simply ticking off successes and failures.

Next Month

In the next installment, I'll show off several more social skill challenges, drawing from requests from my inbox, illustrating how you can mix together multiple challenges and showing off some new methods you can use. See you next month!

About the Author

Mike Mearls is the Lead Designer for the Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game. His recent credits include *H1: Keep on the Shadowfell* and *Player's Handbook 2*.

Narrative Threads

by Stephen Radney-MacFarland

If you're a D&D combat junkie like me, it is easy to get lost in the rush of encounters and combat. But while the combat encounter may be the most visceral part of D&D, it's not even half of the story. Between encounters, you need to describe the world, facilitate the story, and give players interesting roleplaying experiences.

For the new gamer, or even the old pro who has his combat encounter down, the trick of good D&D narration and story information flow can be a challenge. This month I'm going to share some tricks and advice on how to introduce and expand on narration and discuss a few huge pitfalls to watch out for.

Keep it Short, then Actively Expand

I've played under a lot of DMs and adventure writers who are so pleased with the story they've created or the history to an adventure site that they've concocted that the first thing they want to do is make sure the players all know how cool it is. Enter long-winded exposition. Usually, all of this just makes me pine for a button to skip past this *D&D* version of a cut scene. While this might make me a bad friend or an unfeeling jerk, I don't think I'm atypical in this regard.

I'm not saying that it's useless for DMs to come up with long histories and poetic descriptions; I realize a lot of DMs not only find great enjoyment in this, but it also helps them sculpt their campaign world and their story. What I'm saying is that delivering it in huge chunks to players without their prompting is a mistake. A better way to handle narration in *D&D* is to split your description into smaller bits and organize the information into a) things the players need in order to understand what's going on, and b) things they can discover if they make the effort. In other words, start you narration with a quick, broad brush, and give further information in small doses when your players ask for the information.

Here's an example from my home campaign. The characters have been tracking a group of norker bandits. They have followed the tracks to a dusty and rock-strewn badlands called the Earthscar, when they finally find the norker's destination.

From this vantage point, you see a dusty canyon almost a quarter of a mile across. The norker tracks lead down a steep and treacherous path on your side of the gulch, travel across it, and then seem to climb a slope to a craggy rise on the canyon's far side. A cave pierces the canyon wall at the top of that rise. All is calm except for a dust cloud to the north, kicked up by a rider speeding toward the rise.

These four sentences take me less than 20 seconds to utter. They set the stage simply and clearly while giving the players plenty of things to question. The first question is almost always about the rider. Now, you might ask, "why not just add a sentence or two describing the rider in the introduction?" The reason is twofold. First, I want to keep the intro as simple as possible. Second, I want to give the PCs the chance to gain this information actively and possibly gain even more information, depending on their success with Perception checks.

Let me further explain what I mean. The characters at this point are level 3, or close to it, so I set the DCs for that level. (See the chart "Difficulty Class and Damage By Level," *Dungeon Master's Guide*® page 42. If you don't have the Deluxe *Dungeon Master's Guide*, you'll want to refer to the changes to that chart.) Then I'll expand the information with each check, writing it in such a way that I can start reading at the lowest DC and keep going until I get to the highest DC the PC reached, and it doesn't seem disjointed. I'll typically allow the players to take 10 on these rolls, or assume they took 10 if they rolled less than 10. Since they deal with each character's perception of the situation, I don't allow cooperation or rerolls (unless they use a power that happens to grant one).

DC 10: The rider is humanoid, tall and muscular, wearing ornate red armor. His helmet makes it hard to see his race. His mount seems to be a large, tiger-like beast.

DC 15: Comfortable in the saddle, the rider holds himself with a warrior's bearing. The cat beneath him moves with power and grace, and you make out that it has large, saber-like canines. The rider's ornate armor and saddle is adorned with strange symbols of a foreign style, portraying a repetition of skulls and snake patterns.

DC 20: For a brief instant, the rider turns his head to look behind him, allowing a brief look at his face. He's a hobgoblin.

The DC 10 check is almost a given. As long as the player's ask the question, they will get the information. Just the fact that they asked is important. It puts the information in the realm of player action, which makes it more concrete to the player, more memorable.

You'll also notice that I took out the easy DC (it's so low that I assumed it in the initial read-aloud text) and added one at DC hard +5. I call this the critical success DC. It is there to reward your high rollers, or medium rollers who are trained in Perception. When dispensing information, find ways to reward builds and high dice rolls.

I can put together a similar group of DCs for Nature checks for those players who ask more about hobgoblins, the feline mount, or features of the surrounding area, plus History DCs for players who ask about the symbols on the armor and the saddle. I'll typically use the same take 10 and cooperation guidelines that I used for the Perception check, for similar reasons.

Putting together the short snippets of information in a DC structure allows me not only to focus on information that will typically be important to players (and stops me from going on extraneous world-building tangents when preparing a game), it also lets me create a number of story rewards that act like (but aren't quite) Easter eggs in the higher-DC ranges. I'll take those bits of information and make them relevant later in the adventure – but I'll write more about that next month.

For those of you who don't want to spend your time writing up DC lists (no matter how brief), that's one of the benefits of this system. You have the DC ranges; you can make stuff up on the fly. This is also handy when your players come up with a creative way to use a skill check to glean information from a situation. Just make sure to write down the information you gave out. You'll want to refer to it later.

Don't Describe Brick Walls (Even When They Don't Look Like Brick Walls)

At a convention a few months ago, a player approached me and complained about his frustrating Dungeon Master. He explained that his group was on a mission to infiltrate a local thieves' guild that had a base of operations in a local tavern. The group carefully scoped out the tavern, noting all the entrances and exits – most importantly a very well guarded front door and a seemingly locked but unguarded back door. When it was time to make their move, they opted to try the back door. They masterfully picked the lock, but then discovered that the door was barred from the inside, preventing them from getting into the tavern. They tried a few things, gave their DM a host of ideas of how they could foil the barred door without breaking it down, but he shot down every idea. They eventually gave up and went around to the front to fight their way in.

"Why did you put the back door there?" "Because taverns have back doors . . ."

The player asked if Thievery could be used to get through a barred door. He felt like it should at a higher DC. While I kept quiet on the subject at the

time, I silently agreed with him. I know how hard a DM's job is, so as a general rule when talking to players, I try to not be critical of their DM. After all, I am only hearing one side of the story, and there are few things more annoying for a DM than hearing, "but the WotC guy said" from one of her players the session after a show.

Later at that same convention, as it so happened, a DM sauntered up and started talking to me about his last game session. He spun a yarn about how his PCs had to break into a local thieves' guild, and pretty soon I realized I was hearing the exact same story from the other side of the screen. He explained that the characters started with the back door but couldn't get in because it was barred. That's when I pounced.

"What did they have to do to get through the back door?"

"They couldn't. It was barred."

"Why did you put the back door there?"

He looked at me like I just told him the world was flat. "Because taverns have back doors," he answered.

What the DM didn't understand was that in describing his game world, he gave his players something that looked like a choice but acted like a brick wall.

One of the fun parts of D&D is being part of a fun and plausible story, and too much hand waving hurts that.

This is a very easy trap to fall into. DMs want to make their world seem real, so they describe it in real-seeming terms. But often they forget that the player's first look at the world is through their description, and even the most throw-away line will likely be latched onto by players who will assume they can interact with it. It's not an unreasonable assumption. After all, unlike a computer game, *D&D* has only the limits that the DM imagines. Unlike a computer game, every door can conceivably be opened; every rooftop could be the setting for a grand and exciting chase; every cave could have scary monsters living in it. Whenever you, the DM, put something on the map or mention something in exposition, you are inviting the players to investigate. When this thing is not a real or meaningful choice, player frustration can build.

While this bit of advice is another reason why you should start simple and expand with your narration, it's also a cautionary tale. Don't get so caught up in verisimilitude that you end up describing things that you don't want the PCs to fiddle with. They'll want to fiddle, try to interact with it from seven different angles, and when they give up, they'll wonder why the heck you brought it up in the first place. And that's a fair question.

Next month, I'll keep going with this general topic, and we will look at facilitating the story that you build up from those narration points and building and running interesting roleplaying encounters that don't happen to be skill challenges. Until then, let's look in the mailbag.

Why Did I Split the Party?

I run a game that meets once every couple of months, due to the sorts of schedule conflicts that can only happen in real life; we generally get together near a holiday or some other extended weekend. The group is (normally) eight players strong, but the last couple of sessions we've had the same three people not manage to make it for their own various reasons.

The group has made considerable progress in their absence, including the beginnings of a long sea voyage, and I'm not sure how to handle the missing players' return. It'd be kind of hard to hand wave their absence; after all, when their ship was attacked by pirates, I can't imagine the PCs would be happy that some of their number were asleep below decks!

So if and when these players do return, should I have them roll up fresh characters and treat them as fresh recruits to the party of heroes? Or should I find some way of having their old characters catch up to the main group? Or some combination of the two? Or am I freaking out over something that shouldn't be as much of a dilemma as I'm making it out to be?

– Split Party Dave

I don't think you're freaking out. You just want to keep that narrative thread. You want it to make sense for both you and your players, which is always important. First, look back at what you've described before. Was it assumed that the other characters got on the ship? If the answer is yes, don't backtrack. Come up with reasons why they didn't help in the pirate fight. Maybe they had trouble below decks (the portion of the fight that the players were involved in may have been only part of the whole battle). Maybe they were taken captive. Unless you have someone proxy playing someone else's PC, feel free to treat it like an NPC – that is, make up the story.

If the assumption was that the playerless PCs weren't on the ship, you have more options and some harder choices. You can have the players roll up new characters, but this limits investment, and given the scheduling challenges, it's probably better to capitalize on the investment you have. If I were in your

position, I would find an unusual and interesting way to get the other characters to the destination. In a world of strange magic and even stranger practitioners, this shouldn't be too hard. If you have a more mundane setting, just having them take an alternate route with another sea captain (whose ship didn't run into those pesky pirates) is fine.

If you are a truly casual group, hand waving is fine, but I only recommend it as a last resort. One of the fun parts of *D&D* is being part of a fun and plausible story, and too much hand waving hurts that.

Would They Just Die Already?

I like playing and running D&D games. I am in the process of running a 4th Edition game now. I am finding out through running my game that character death in 4th Edition is kind of difficult to achieve. I do not actively try to kill my players' characters, but I do believe in the angst and rush of death being an option. But, in 4th edition it seems like character death has been made virtually impossible. With the negative hit points so high and the 3 death save rolls to stabilize your character, I have seen all my players snap back from death more than a few times in my game. Death, in my game, has kind of become a thing that all my players are not even remotely afraid of happening anymore. They just say "It's OK. I will just stabilize in the next few rolls, and then when the fight's over I'll get healed." I'm getting frustrated. Is there something I can do to the rule of death as the DM to make it a little scarier?

– John DM to the Unbreakable PCs

I have to say that when I read your letter, John, my first response was, "hit them harder." It's good advice, but the more I thought about it, I realized that it wasn't enough. It is true, 4e makes it harder for characters to die – or rather, easier to keep alive with smart play – and we did that on purpose. It sounds as if your players are pretty savvy with all those life-saving resources, and that's good, but it also means that you are going to have to work harder to challenge them.

First, play with terrain. It's a commonly overlooked part of the game that can dramatically alter how a combat runs. Grab grass, ember moss, and blood rock are some of my favorites when it comes to increasing my monster's punch, while cloudspore and cave slime do yeoman's work to create sequestering terrain. How does sequestering terrain help you in this regard? It makes it harder for life saving effects to happen. Sure the warlord and the cleric can do their thing from a distance, but putting hazards between the dying character and a character attempting to make a Heal check creates tension and often necessitates heroics.

If that doesn't get you where you need to go, put in higher level monsters that do more damage with each attack. Play around with triggered encounters, reinforcements, and multiple pull encounters to layer on fresh challenges halfway through the encounter when the healing reserves are running low. Also, don't be afraid to show that some monsters aren't afraid to coup de grace. You don't have to do it a lot, but doing it when it counts really gets the PCs to take the challenges and their real chances of death seriously.

Lastly, ongoing damage and hazardous terrain are both good tools to really ramp up the danger of dipping into negative hit points. Smart placements of poisons and areas of auto damage in prime battlefield spots will challenge players in new and often deadly ways.

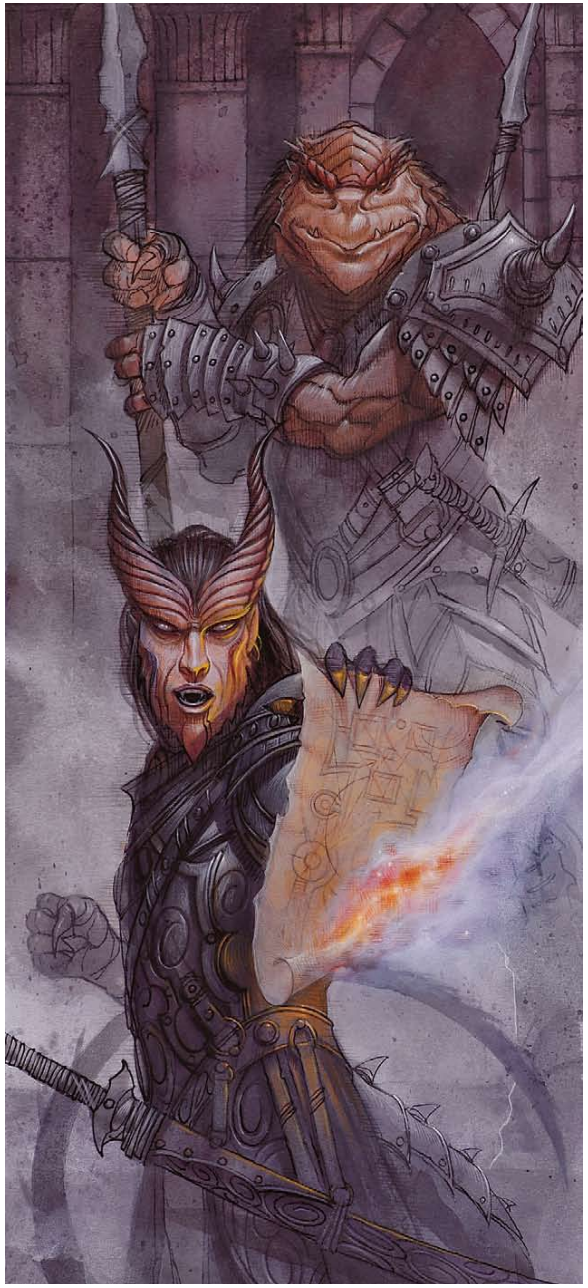
I hope those help. Go get 'em, John!

About the Author

The stars were definitely wrong when Stephen Radney-MacFarland came screaming into the world one stormy Christmas day, in our nation's capital, during the Nixon administration. Spending most of his impressionable years as a vagabond and ne're-do-well, Stephen eventually settled in the Northwest to waste his life on roleplaying games. Once "that RPGA guy", Stephen is now a developer in RPG R&D where he doesn't create the traps . . . he just makes them deadlier. He also teaches a class on roleplaying design for the Art Institute of Seattle, molding the minds of young and upcoming designers. Be afraid. Be very afraid.

Episode 13: Updating the Campaign

by James Wyatt
Illustration by Wayne England



So far, my Greenbrier campaign has met five times, on Friday lunchtimes. I had been aiming for three weeks out of every four, but so far—between pressing deadlines and days off to finish my novel—I've made just about every other week. I think that schedule, combined with the fact that a lunchtime game is just hard to get immersed in, has kept us from getting too deep into the story I have set up for the campaign, but we're making progress in that direction.

Two sessions ago, the characters found a temple area in the caverns they'd been exploring. They fought some dolgrims (from the upcoming *Eberron® Campaign Guide*), a couple of mad slashers, and a warped goblin mindwrecker (the goblin hexer with the foulspawn grue's powers). Near the end of that fight, the brier haunt (my leafy adaptation of the shadow haunt from our D&D® Game Day adventure last year) whispered in Oskar's ear, "This is the place." So last week, after the group had taken a short rest, Oskar pulled out the ritual scroll that Havrakhad the seer had given him back in the village and began reading.

I asked Mike to make a Religion check, and he got a 4. It turns out that, while Oskar is skill-intensive and devoted to Ioun, Religion is not one of his strong points. Perfect. There was a popping sound, and two monsters appeared in the center of the room. (I was using one of the poster maps from *Keep on the Shadowfell*—the temple with the rivers of blood flowing toward a central pit. In this case, the rivers of blood were lines of warping energy where the forces of the Far Realm made the stone flow toward that central pit. During the fight, they acted like conveyor belts in RoboRally™, moving a creature on one of the streams 1d6 squares along their paths. The creatures appeared in the air over the central pit on the map.) These were fell taints, a new low-level aberrant creature from *Monster Manual™ 2*. The rest of the party moved to engage the fell taints while Oskar kept trying to figure out the ritual.

So now we had a skill challenge happening in the midst of the combat. Here's what I wrote down for the skill challenge:

> Skill Challenge—perform ritual. Level 1, complexity 3 (8 successes). DC 5/**10**/15 Religion, Arcana, Dungeoneering, **Group Endurance** each round, History, Nature. Successful checks deal 1d4 + 1 damage to all fell taints.

That's a far cry from the skill challenge format we've developed in our published adventures, but I knew more or less what I wanted to happen and how I wanted those skills to work in the challenge. Oskar only ever made that one Religion check, which he failed terribly, but he used Dungeoneering to get a better grasp on what was happening (there was some

kind of rift in space that was allowing Far Realm energies and creatures to enter the world), Nature to see how the ritual was repairing the problem, and Arcana to finish the ritual successfully. Nordil helped with a check at the end, and the group contributed to the success by passing both group Endurance checks once I remembered to start calling for them. (If at least half the group succeeded on the check, I called it a success for the group, as they managed to hold off the ill effects of the crazy, throbbing energies in the room.)

The key part of the challenge, in my mind, was making sure it felt integrated to the combat, so it didn't feel like Oskar and anyone else who participated in the skill checks was off in a separate encounter from everyone else. Having his successful checks deal damage to the fell taints prevented anyone from feeling like he should drop the ritual until the fight was over, but having his failed checks add more monsters to the fight . . . well, it would have made the consequences feel more significant, if he had failed any more checks after the first.

I know that Mike is going to be expanding on the concept of using skill challenges in combat in his Ruling Skill Challenges column this week, so be sure to check that out if you want more ideas for using this kind of technique.

For my Greenbrier campaign, I've decided that challenges similar to this one are going to be a recurring theme in the campaign. Each time the characters delve into Greenbrier Chasm, they find another one of these shrines, probably dedicated to different deities, and face a different challenge to try to repair the shrine and seal a breach that's allowing Far Realm energies to spill into the world. Eventually, they'll realize that all of these shrines were part of the prison that kept the Speaker in Dreams imprisoned, which might or might not have some impact on their final confrontation with that aberrant monstrosity.

The other fun thing about that encounter was the treasure I gave out afterward. Uldane has been convinced that his unremarkable short sword is actually a *holy avenger* that has yet to reveal itself, so at the end of the fight it began to glow, and I told Bill that his sword is now a level 4 *sunblade*. (I ignored where the book says *sunblades* are always Heavy Blades.) Oskar also received a reward—a revelation from Ioun that acts like a level 2 magic item. I won't go into details, but suffice it to say this is a glimpse at a cool new kind of reward introduced in *Dungeon Master's Guide*™ 2.

HAPPY TWOS-DAY

So I mentioned a monster from *Monster Manual 2* and a reward from *Dungeon Master's Guide 2*. Now let's talk about *Player's Handbook*™ 2, which releases today.

I started this column by paging through the *Player's Handbook* and making decisions about the races in the game, in particular, and how I wanted them to fit into my campaign. That's probably the most fundamental aspect of world-building, as far as building a D&D setting goes. *PH2* gives me five more races to think about—as well as the big question of what I want to do with the primal power source in my game.

Deva: One nice thing about devas is that they don't require a lot of campaign space. There's no assumption that there are communities of devas anywhere in the world—they're rare enough that you don't expect a deva neighborhood in Silverymoon. That said, I was aiming for a sort of backwoods, provincial feel for the start of the campaign, which is why I excluded tieflings at the outset, and I'm inclined to do the same for the deva. It turned out not to be an issue for either race, but I like the idea that we could introduce deva and tiefling NPCs or perhaps replacement PCs down the line, when the campaign's scope has grown somewhat.

Gnome: As fey creatures, gnomes are easy to incorporate alongside eladrin and elves in the campaign. Let's say there was a gnome village near Cendriane, in the Feywild equivalent of the Burning Wood. That gnome village was destroyed along with Cendriane, sending refugees scattering through the world and the Feywild.

Goliath: I've decided that goliaths live in the Frosthorn Peaks, off to the west, and are seldom seen in the lowlands. Many people assume they're nothing but old legends, or possibly extinct, but outcasts from the goliath tribes do occasionally wander toward the general region of Greenbrier. Chris Perkins decided to play a goliath barbarian in my game, and because of him I'll be thinking of ways to make his fluency in the Giant language useful. When the characters head toward Harrows Pass in the Frosthorns, I'll try to draw on his background more as well.

Half-Orc: I've put orcs in the area of Tower Watch, so I figure a PC half-orc would come from that area. Nobody in my group wanted to play a half-orc, but if they had, I would have explored the possibility of linking the character to the orc Gatekeeper tradition.

Shifter: Well, this one's easy, because I decided at the start of my campaign that I'd use this race from the *Monster Manual* in my game. If I had started the campaign earlier, Rich could have made his shifter character with the rules in the *Monster Manual* and then updated him with racial feats with the release of *PH2*.

Primal Power

I said two months ago that four of the six PCs were new primal classes from *PH2*. Well, Rich has since rebuilt his shifter warden as a fighter, so now it's only

half the group. Jeremy's druid Etholas, Chris Youngs' shaman Nordil, and Chris Perkins' barbarian Turuk (the Victor) are all primal characters, and to a greater or lesser extent, the decisions I make about the primal power source in my campaign will have an impact on those characters' stories.

Fortunately, the themes of the primal power source are already pretty central in my game. As the introduction of *PH2* says, "Characters who use the primal power source . . . are staunch enemies of aberrant creatures whose very existence is a blight on the natural world." Given that the whole campaign revolves around a fight against aberrant monsters and forces, these characters have a real home in the story of the campaign.

I've established a sacred place for primal characters at the edge of the Burning Wood, a circle of standing stones called the Fire Glade, where the farmers of the village used to commune with the primal spirits. Jeremy's druid, a native of the village, is the de facto caretaker of the Fire Glade, and Nordil was drawn there (by his spirit companion, Nugget) when he arrived in the village.

When I was discussing organizations back in Episode 3, I decided that the Circle of the True (which incorporates Eberron's Gatekeeper traditions) would have a primal focus and include members of all primal classes. I'm thinking now that Jeremy's druid might be acquainted with these traditions without really connecting them to a specific organization, but I'll certainly want to develop his ties to the Circle down the line in the campaign.

Character Backgrounds

The other exciting new feature of *Player's Handbook 2* is character backgrounds. Even though two-thirds of the group used a race and/or class from *PH2* in making their characters, hardly anyone delved into the backgrounds section yet. Only Chris Youngs chose a background: the Outcast racial background for dwarves.

> **Outcast:** Your family and clan have cast you out, severing the ties that are so important to the members of your race. What did you do to deserve this fate? Are you trying to earn your way back into your clan, or to make a great name for yourself and establish a new clan of your own? Are your fellow adventurers a surrogate family for you, or are you a loner at heart?

Chris told me at the start of the campaign that Nordil was exiled because he's such a coward—his clan sent him into the world to prove his bravery. This morning, he sent some more information:

> I've been thinking about Nordil's background more, and I think it would be more interesting if the reason he's so scared of everything is because he saw something as a young lad that scared the crap out of him, and he's never overcome that fear. That, then, led to his outcast status. I think that maybe he wandered off into the Underdark and came across some old, ancient wall or shrine or temple, and there were words on it in a language he didn't know, but that he could somehow read, and they freaked him out terribly. So now he speaks and reads that language, but doesn't know why. Maybe it's Deep Speech, maybe it's Primordial, maybe Abyssal, maybe Supernal—it's something weird and terrifying, and sometimes when he's asleep, the words on the wall come crawling back into his head, giving him night terrors.

"That's awesome," I wrote back. "Make it Deep Speech." Deep Speech is the language of aberrant monsters, of course, with its linguistic roots muddied in the alien gibbering of the Far Realm. So I've tied his background into the main theme of the campaign, and that's got me thinking about the reach of the Speaker in Dreams. It was imprisoned beneath Greenbrier. The Gates of Firestorm Peak are off to the west. Nordil and Oskar come from the dwarven stronghold to the south.

The obvious answer, now that I think about it, is that this whole region has a Far Realm problem stretching way back in its history, all stemming from the Gates of Firestorm Peak. The Speaker in Dreams terrorized the eastern plains and was finally imprisoned deep in the earth beneath what would later be the village of Greenbrier. Something Else lurks deep beneath the southern mountains, where a trace of its presence wormed its way into Nordil's mind.

The character backgrounds presented in *PH2* are a great way to get players thinking about what makes their characters tick, and also a great way to help me tie their individual stories into the campaign story. So I've asked everyone else in the group, now that we all have copies of *PH2* on our desks, to choose one to three background elements for their characters and let me know what they pick. Next month, I'll look at stitching the rest of the characters into the storyline.

About the Author

James Wyatt is the D&D® Design Manager for Wizards of the Coast Roleplaying R&D. He was one of the lead designers for 4th Edition D&D and the primary author of the 4th Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*®. He was one of the designers of the *Eberron*® *Campaign Setting* and is the author of several *Eberron* novels.